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Imagining Troy
Fictions of translation in medieval French literature

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IMAGINING TROY

**FICTIONS OF TRANSLATION IN
MEDIEVAL FRENCH LITERATURE**

Jessica Stoll

Submitted for the degree of PhD

Abstract

Stories of the Trojan War and its aftermath are the oldest – apart from those in the Bible – to be retold in medieval literature. Between 1165-1450, they catch the imagination of French-language writers, who create histories in and for that burgeoning vernacular. These writers make Troy a place of origins for peoples and places across Europe.

One way in which writers locate origins at Troy is through the device of translation. Geoffrey of Monmouth, Benoît de Sainte-Maure and the writers of the prose *Troie*, the *Histoire Ancienne* and the *Roman de Perceforest* all claim to have translated old texts; for Benoît and the prose *Troie* writers, this text is a Latin copy of an eyewitness account of the Trojan War. The writers thus connect their locations with Troy retroactively, in both space and time.

Within this set of highly successful stories, writers' presentations of translation therefore have important consequences for understanding what is at stake in medieval French textual production. Taking Derrida's *Monolinguisme de l'Autre* as my theoretical starting point, this thesis sheds new light on medieval writers' concepts of translation, creation and origins by asking two questions:

- To what extent is translation considered integral to creation and textual production in medieval French texts?
- Why does the conceit of translation from a lost source seem to shape narratives even when this source is a fiction?

All these writers produce texts in French, or translate from that language, but these texts were written in geographically distinct areas: the *Roman de Troie* comes from Northern France, the prose Troy traditions are copied mainly in Italy,

John Gower wrote in London, Christine de Pizan was at court in Paris and the extant *Perceforest* manuscripts were produced in Burgundy. The Trojan material therefore inspires writers throughout this period all over Western Europe.

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Abbreviations

BnF	Bibliothèque Nationale de France
DMF	Dictionnaire du moyen français: http://www.atilf.fr/dmf/
FEW	<i>Französisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch</i> , ed. by Walther von Wartburg, 25 vols (Basel: Zbinden, 1925-)
Godefroy	Frédéric Godefroy, <i>Dictionnaire de l'Ancienne Langue française et de tous ses dialectes du IXe au XVe siècle</i> , 12 vols (Paris: Vieweg, 1880-1902)
Lewis and Short	Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, <i>A Latin Dictionary</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879; repr. 1980)
MED	Middle English Dictionary: http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary Online</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)
SATF	Société des anciens textes français
TL	Adolf Tobler and Ernst Lommatzsch, <i>Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch</i> , 10 vols (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1925-)

Introduction: The Lexicon of Translation

Medieval French Literature and Translation

From the start, writing in medieval French is translation. The Strasbourg Oaths are generally accepted as the first piece of writing in French, and are conserved in a principally Latin manuscript that dates from around 840.¹ These oaths record a moment of bilingual contact through diplomacy. Two kings (and brothers), Louis the German and Charles the Bald, give speeches in the vernacular spoken by the other's army. Thus the first extant example of a French text is attributed to the ruler of Germany, Louis the German, who chooses to use French for diplomatic purposes; the ruler of France, Charles the Bald, gives his speech in German according to this text. The full significance of the Strasbourg Oaths can only be understood with reference to its manuscript setting, which demands translation between vernaculars, and places French alongside Latin texts. The second earliest text written in French, *La Séquence de Sainte Eulalie*, also from the late ninth century, appears alongside a Latin version of the same text, *Cantica Virginis Eulalia*. The text draws on a long history of Latin hagiography, and appears in a multilingual manuscript that also contains a German text, the *Rithmus Teutonicus* (882), written in the same hand.² From the start, written French is located within a multilingual context, and implicitly, is a language in translation.

¹ BnF, MS f. lat. 9768. For dates, see Philippe Lauer, 'Introduction', to Nithard, *L'Histoire des Fils de Louis le Pieux*, ed. by Lauer (Paris: Champion, 1926), pp. i-xx (pp. xiv-xv); text of the oaths, pp. 102-9.

² Bibliothèque Municipale de Valenciennes, 150.

Three centuries later, textual production soars in both the *langue d'oc* and the *langue d'oïl*.³ Many of the textual practices that form this burgeoning literature ostensibly begin with some form of translation, usually but not invariably from Latin: hagiography, *lais*, fables, bestiaries and romance. These texts often account for their own production through a process of translation, whether fictional or not.

One writer whose work forms part of this growing activity is Marie de France. The narrators of both her *Lais* and *Fables* (ll. 11-20) suggest that these texts were created through a process of translation.⁴ For example, in her *Lais*, Marie notes the prevailing tendency to translate from Latin (ll. 30-2), and wants to distinguish her own work. This desire makes her think of the *lais* that she has heard (l. 33), which she tells us elsewhere are in Breton, and so she decides to translate some of them. At the start of *Laüstic*, she notes the *lais*' wide transmission in translation. It forms the aesthetic basis of this tale, which opens

Une aventure vus dirai
Dunt li Bretun firent un lai.
Laüstic ad nun, ceo m'est vis,
Si l'apelent en lur païs;
Ceo est russignol en franceis
E nihtegale en dreit engleis. (ll. 1-6)
[I shall tell you an adventure from which the Bretons made a *lai*. I believe it is called 'Laüstic', they call it thus in their country; this is *russignol* in French and *nihtegale* in good English.]

This moment of translation from Breton into French and English forms a symbol for the entire tale. A lover and a lady carry on an affair 'lungement' [for a long

³ See Michael Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), Chapter 2, pp. 46-82 for compelling historical arguments why the amount of texts produced increased so greatly during the twelfth century and later.

⁴ Marie de France, *Lais*, ed. by Alfred Ewert (Oxford: Blackwell, 1976); Marie de France, *Fables*, ed. and trans. by Harriet Spiegel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987). Further references to these editions are given in parentheses within the text by line number. Translations are the author's own throughout, unless otherwise specified.

time] (l. 57) by speaking to, and looking at, each other at their chamber windows; when the lady's husband asks her 'pur quei levot e u ala' [why she was getting up and where she was going] (l. 82), in the middle of the night, she replies that 'il nen a joië en cest mund, | ki n'ot le laüstic chanter' [whoever does not hear the nightingale sing has no joy in this world] (ll. 84-5). Within the story, then, the nightingale is first evoked in direct speech, at the very moment that the lady requires an excuse to her husband. He promptly has the nightingale 'englué' [trapped] (l. 107) and kills it (l. 114). The nightingale's body is only brought into the story once dead, having first been mentioned in a spoken utterance.

The lady wraps the dead bird in a cloth embroidered with her interpretation of the events, which we cannot read. Thus the bird becomes a symbol subject to characters' interpretation, and thereby forms an increasingly complex symbol of that act: the many ensuing analyses of this verbal creation parallel the dual translation for the Breton word 'laüstic'. The wife decides to send the dead nightingale to her lover:

En une piece de samit,
A or brusdé e tut escrit,
Ad l'oiselet envelopé. (ll. 135-7)
[She enveloped the little bird in a piece of samit, embroidered in gold and with everything written upon it]

Thus the lover learns what has happened; he has a 'chasse' [box] (l. 155) made from gold and precious stones in which he 'fist [...] enseeler' [had sealed up] (l. 155) the dead bird and cloth. He adds his own layer of meaning, treating the nightingale as a saintly relic, and therefore, a symbol that their love is dead. However, as Simon Gaunt has argued, this act 'in some respects is precisely the

opposite of what she intended. He treats their love as a thing of the past'.⁵ After these multiple fictional interpretations of a bird that first appears as a verbal reference, the narrator observes that the story 'ne pot estre lunges celee' [could not be hidden for long] (l. 158). Marie notes that the Bretons finally make a *lai* of this story, called *Le Laüstic*, before she translates it (l. 159); the prologue suggests an absent English version exists, too (l. 6). Translation provides the interpretive starting point and conclusion for this *lai*, which fictionalises the intertwined processes of figurative reading, transmission and creative writing. The nightingale thus acts as a figure of translation: its song begins a signifying chain, which ends with a story in translation, and which implies the initial figuration. Its body is introduced and then moves throughout the story, because the characters understand it to be significant on account of its encoded love song: Marie shows a slippage between the translated song and the bird's body within the *lai*. Translation is important as a way of understanding the act of making fiction.

The first French texts in which writers conceptualise their creative processes most clearly as a form of translation are the *romans antiques* (1160-70). The *Roman de Thebes*, the *Roman d'Eneas*, the *Roman de Troie* and the *Alexandre* material all take place in the classical period, and are adapted or translated from Latin sources. The *romans antiques* writers comment on their texts' status as translation and outline their approach to the material (although this may also be fictitious). This practice continues in romance writing throughout the medieval period. Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligés* offers a famous enactment of

⁵ Simon Gaunt, *Retelling the Tale: An Introduction to Medieval French Literature* (London: Duckworth, 2001), p. 62.

translatio studii et imperii; *Guillaume de Palerne*, the *Castelain de Couci et la Dame de Fayel*, the non-cyclic *Lancelot do Lac*, the *Queste del Saint Graal* and the *Roman de Waldef* all equally posit themselves as forms of translation.⁶ All these texts fictionalise their own production through transmission, which is most frequently written. This process often demands translation, whether from Latin or from another vernacular, as in the example from *L'Aüstic*.

The medieval fascination with translation does not end there. For example, other romance texts, though not referring specifically to their transmission through translation, either tell stories that show physical translation (*Athis et Prophlias*, *Partonopeus de Blois*, *Guillaume de Dole*, *Joufroi de Poitiers*, *Roman de la Violette*) or suggest that their stories have an obscured source, perhaps an earlier telling (*Chevalier de la Charrette*, *Floire et Blancheflor*) or a dream (the *Roman de la Rose*, most famously).⁷

The importance these writers place on translation as a mode of textual production distinguishes these texts from other genres, such as the *chanson de geste* and the lyric. The writer who includes a claim to translate from another written source highlights his text's secondary quality within a written tradition, whereas the writer who claims to transcribe an orally transmitted work creates at

⁶ See Michelle Freeman, *The Poetics of Translatio Studii and Conjointure: Chrétien de Troyes's Cligés* (Lexington, KY: French Forum, 1979), esp. pp. 13-16.

⁷ On geographical translation, see for example Sharon Kinoshita, *Medieval Boundaries: Rethinking Difference in Old French Translation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), esp. Chapter 3 on *Floire et Blancheflor*, pp. 77-104, Chapter 4 on Marie de France's *Lais*, pp. 105-132 and Chapter 6 on *La Fille Le Conte de Ponthieu*, pp. 176-99. *Guillaume de Palerne*, ed. by H. Michelant (Paris: SATF, 1876), ll. 9658-9; *Le Roman du Castelain de Couci et de la Dame de Fayel*, ed. by Maurice Delbouille (Paris: SATF, 1936), l. 3; *Lancelot do Lac: The Non-Cyclic Old French Prose Romance*, ed. by Elspeth Kennedy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 571, ll. 20-6; *La Queste del Saint Graal*, ed. by Albert Pauphilet (Paris: Champion, 1923), p. 279, l. 22-p. 280, l. 3; *Le Roman de Waldef (Cod. Bodmer 168)*, ed. by A. J. Holden (Cologny-Geneva: Fondation Martin Bodmer, 1984), ll. 85-6.

least one and possibly a whole series of unrecoverable sources, which may date back to an unspecified time when no written record of the text existed. The extent to which the texts' own fictions of oral or written origins continue to shape critical reflection, classification and periodisation is striking, as the *traditionnaliste* school of *chanson de geste* criticism highlights, especially, for example, Jean Rychner's work.⁸ Writers of these kinds of texts do not usually claim that their texts are translations, but rather emphasise their history in monolingual oral transmission. The *chansons de geste* and the lyric are sometimes interpreted as a retroactive glimpse of a lost oral culture, which is likely to be a result of this presentation.⁹ More recently, Evelyn Birge Vitz has offered arguments for the orality of the romance genre: her contrast of the *Roman de Troie* and the *Roman de Thèbes* is characteristic, in that she notes the writer of the *Thèbes* 'neither prefaces nor concludes his story with any discussion of his sources', and thus argues that he is likely to be a minstrel who knew some clerks.¹⁰ A more nuanced position is offered by Brian Stock, who suggests the following:

Throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries an important transformation began to take place. The written did not simply supersede the oral, although that happened in large measure: a new type of interdependence also arose between the two. In other words, oral discourse effectively began to function within a universe of communications governed by texts. On many occasions actual texts were not present, but people often thought or behaved as if they were. Texts

⁸ For example, Jean Rychner, *La Chanson de geste: essai sur l'art épique des jongleurs* (Geneva: Droz, 1955).

⁹ Henry J. Chaytor, *From Script to Print: An Introduction to Medieval Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1945), pp. 126-8 offers contrastive examples; Colin C. Smith, 'The Vernacular', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History V: c. 1198-c. 1300*, ed. by David Abulafia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 71-83 (pp. 74-7), offers nuanced historicisation of orality's place in the European development of vernaculars.

¹⁰ Evelyn Birge Vitz, *Orality and Performance in Early French Romance* (Woodbridge: Brewer, 1999), p. 58 and p. 84.

thereby emerged as a reference system both for everyday activities and for giving shape to many larger vehicles of explanation.¹¹

In a culture of literacy, it is not necessary to be literate to be affected by the distinctive changes in ways of thinking which arise from this technology; this period did see great growth in written literature at French-speaking courts, partly as a result of increased bureaucracy.¹² Stock's position highlights the difficulty of discussing a culture, of which much is inaccessible because it is oral but whose residue is written; such difficulty further suggests that perhaps new questions are needed. If scholars have struggled to establish whether the texts' fictions of oral or written production are true or not, interrogating the effects of these fictions might be a more productive way to approach the complexities of understanding medieval perspectives on translation, as the example from Marie de France highlights. The attempt to understand these attitudes has driven much scholarship on medieval translation to date.

In the modern critical heritage, the study of translation arises first in textual editions. The introductions to such editions usually contain a section on the text's possible sources and sometimes its legacy in translation; Léopold Constans's edition of the *Roman de Troie* is a thorough example.¹³ To take just some of the scholarship important to this thesis, Edmond Faral's *Recherches sur les sources latines des contes et romans courtois* provides a strong example of

¹¹ Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 3.

¹² Stock and Clanchy offer the classic accounts exploring such a position; Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), argues for a renewed emphasis on 'aurality', that is, the reception of the written word read aloud.

¹³ For example, Benoît de Sainte-Maure, *Le Roman de Troie, par Benoît de Sainte-Maure*, 6 vols, ed. by Léopold Constans (Paris: SATF, 1904-1912), VI (1912), pp. 192-263 on its sources and pp. 264-345 on its influence; also see Faral's meticulous review, 'Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie*', *Romania*, 42 (1913), 88-106.

early twentieth-century approaches, producing incisive comments on the portrayal of the Orient in the *Roman de Troie*, for example, as does Paul Meyer's seminal article on the *Histoire Ancienne*.¹⁴ These editors asked important questions about the transmission of texts from a largely philological perspective, frequently seeking the origins of a given narrative, of the history of the French language, of a genre, or of a motif.

Scholars' desire to find – or imagine – the earliest possible source means that underlying assumptions about the relative literary merits of source and translation can adversely affect studies of translation. In much twentieth-century work, comparisons of translation and source for fidelity (or not) arise even if conclusions increasingly try to hedge which is of greater literary value.¹⁵ The *Medieval Translator* series pioneered close study of translation in this period, but many of its articles remain principally animated by close comparisons of source and translation, without asking larger questions about the processes behind such productions or their implications, frequently to establish a writer's sources, how faithful he or she is to them, and thus his or her worth as a translator. For example, J. D. Burnley suggests that 'the formulation of literary values had not such a grip [on medieval writers] as they do on modern scholars [...] An interest in form rather than content was then exceptional'.¹⁶ Such empirical approaches, I suggest,

¹⁴ Edmond Faral, *Recherches sur les sources latines des contes et romans courtois du Moyen Âge* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1913; repr. 1983); Paul Meyer, 'Les premières compilations françaises d'histoire ancienne', *Romania*, 14 (1885), 1-81.

¹⁵ See for example Stephen H. A. Shepherd, 'The Ashmole *Sir Ferumbras*: translation in holograph', in *The Medieval Translator: The Theory and Practice of Translation in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Roger Ellis (Cambridge: Brewer, 1989), pp. 103-21 for a typically deprecatory approach to a translation's merits.

¹⁶ J. D. Burnley, 'Late Medieval English Translation: Types and Reflections', in *The Medieval Translator*, ed. by Ellis, pp. 37-53 (p. 53).

may be usefully supplemented by theoretical work, which pursues new lines of enquiry.

These kinds of questions about relative literary value ultimately limit our appreciation of literature and creative processes in this period, in which translation is an essential mode of production. Conversely, later critics have harnessed translations to create progress narratives for the vernaculars, in which the translation functions as an intermediary between another language (usually Latin) and fully-fledged ‘original’ works of literature.¹⁷ In his meticulous study of Chaucer’s *Boece*, Tim William Machan argues, for example, that Chaucer had two objectives: ‘to stay as close as possible to his source’ and ‘to examine language as language’, which shaped his later works. He suggests that Chaucer’s translation may be a rough draft, and is certainly an early work, because of its literal quality; this kind of criticism measures the relative literary qualities of source and translation.¹⁸ Some of this work emphasises the creativity and novelty of these translations, sometimes through detailed analysis of the relations between translation and the creative process, as Michel Zink’s excellent article ‘La Mutation de la conscience littéraire’ demonstrates, sometimes because it is a disciplinary commonplace – amongst Chaucer scholars, for example – to note the

¹⁷ This is implicit in the dating arguments that place Chaucer’s translations as early work: e.g. Tim William Machan, *Techniques of Translation: Chaucer’s Boece* (Norman: Pilgrim, 1985); Larry D. Benson, ‘Explanatory notes’ to the *Romaunt of the Rose* in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 1103-16 (pp. 1103-4) gives a summary of the discussion on the dating and attribution of the fragments of the *Romaunt of the Rose*, and concludes that it is ‘apprentice work’; Catherine Batt, ‘Malory’s Questing Beast and the Implications of Author as Translator’, in *The Medieval Translator*, ed. by Ellis, pp. 143-66 (p. 166) similarly argues that bad translation makes for good poetry.

¹⁸ *Techniques of Translation*, pp. 126-7.

writer's capacity to 'make a story his own, and to make his own story'.¹⁹ Most productively, Ardis Butterfield and Marilynn Desmond have built on such work to suggest how questions of fidelity might be rethought, by exploring what might lie behind certain translations and multilingual productions, often cursorily dismissed.²⁰

Another important strand of scholarship examines medieval vernacular translation practice in the light of medieval theoretical models, often written in Latin.²¹ This approach is fruitful, and continues to be so, though as Karen Pratt rightly cautions, the gap between theory and practice can be wide.²² Further work has demonstrated the centrality of translation to the development of medieval literacy. This approach has offered new ways into texts, as Douglas Kelly and Barbara Nolan's work on the *romans antiques* demonstrates, and has gone some way to illuminate texts' reception; Suzanne Reynolds's examination of teachers' readings of texts for pedagogical purposes is enlightening in this latter respect.²³

The study of medieval translation has been invigorated by the increasing formalisation of Translation Studies: Rita Copeland's *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics and*

¹⁹ Michel Zink, 'Une mutation de la conscience littéraire: le langage romanesque à travers des exemples français du XII^e siècle', *Cahiers de Civilisation médiévale*, 24 (1981), 3-27; Paul Beekman Taylor, *Chaucer Translator* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1998), p. ii.

²⁰ Ardis Butterfield, 'Rough Translation: Charles d'Orléans, Lydgate and Hoccleve', and Marilynn Desmond, 'On Not Knowing Greek: Leonzio Pilatus's Rendition of the *Iliad* and the *Translatio* of Mediterranean Identities', in *Rethinking Medieval Translation: Ethics, Politics, Theory*, ed. by Emma Campbell and Robert Mills (Cambridge: Brewer, 2012), pp. 204-25 and pp. 21-40.

²¹ See, for example, *Translation Theory and Practice in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Jeanette Beer (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 1997); Freeman, *Poetics of Translatio Studii*.

²² See Karen Pratt, 'Medieval Attitudes to Translation and Adaptation: the Rhetorical Theory and the Poetic Practice', in *The Medieval Translator II: The Theory and Practice of Translation in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Roger Ellis (London: Queen Mary and Westfield College, 1991), pp. 1-27 (p. 18).

²³ Douglas Kelly, 'Translatio studii: Translation, Adaptation and Allegory in Medieval French Literature', *Philological Quarterly*, 57 (1978), 287-310; Barbara Nolan, *Chaucer and the Tradition of the Roman Antique* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Suzanne Reynolds, *Medieval Reading: Grammar, Rhetoric and the Classical Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Translation in the Middle Ages is a milestone study in this respect, because she incorporates methods and insights from that field to produce readings of medieval texts which embed translation thoroughly within its medieval rhetorical and scholastic framework.²⁴

For the wider field of Translation Studies, the single most important text for twentieth- and twenty-first-century work remains Walter Benjamin's essay, 'The Task of the Translator'.²⁵ Benjamin proposes that the literary work is not designed principally to transmit content, and that the same is true of translation. He defines translation instead as a 'mode' (p. 71), explaining that by virtue of a work's 'translatability, the original is connected with the translation'. He sees this connection between the source text's potential for translation and the translation's consequent realization of such potential as 'vital' (p. 72) because 'translation marks the [original's] stage of continued life'. His metaphor here touches on biblical images of translation as natural reproduction, which are taken up by many medieval French texts.

The image of a translation's life leads Benjamin to formulate a theory of meaning in a

Constant state of flux – until it is able to emerge as pure language from the harmony of all the various modes of intention. Until then, it remains hidden in the languages. (p. 75)

²⁴ Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

²⁵ Walter Benjamin, 'The Task of the Translator', in *Illuminations*, trans. by Harry Zorn (London: Fontana, 1973), pp. 70-82. Further references are given in parentheses within the text by page number. On the anglophone reception of this text, and its canonicity, see Susan Ingram, "'The Task of the Translator': Walter Benjamin's Essay in English, a *Forschungsbericht*", *TTR: traduction, terminologie, rédaction*, 10 (1997), 207-33.

Language is far from a reflection of meaning: on the contrary, it obscures meaning, which indeed constantly alters itself through the vicissitudes of linguistic change. Benjamin suggests that this constant state of flux may well characterise all languages ‘until the end of their time’; translation, then, has a crucial role to play in continuing to note both ‘how far removed is [the languages’] hidden meaning from revelation, how close can it be brought by the knowledge of their remoteness’ (p. 75). He suggests that translation always falls short of the ideal; he is thus able to suggest a theory of translation that moves beyond an opposition between fidelity and freedom. He posits the notion of languages as ‘fragments of a greater language’ (p. 79): translation always points to the possibility of an ideal, total language, where signifier and signified are one. This language is both an impossible ideal for the future and a perfect origin from the past. For Benjamin, translation is a secondary but nevertheless vital process, in the service of a ‘true language’ (p. 82).

This essay is crucial for the way we understand translation today, because Benjamin discusses what is at stake in theorizing translation: no less than our concepts of language and creativity. Much work in Translation Studies builds on his work, in light of the insights afforded by post-structuralism, and its historical and geographical development into Postcolonial Studies: a strong example of this is Antoine Berman’s *L’Auberge du lointain*, which combines linguistic insight with postcolonial questions.²⁶ Lawrence Venuti interrogates the marginality of certain kinds of translation and the power dynamics between languages, but his

²⁶ Antoine Berman, *La Traduction et la lettre, ou l’auberge du lointain* (Paris: Éditions Trans-Europ-Repress, 1985; repr. Seuil, 1999).

work applies less straightforwardly to the medieval period, because the methods of production are so distinct that his arguments on copyright and intellectual property must be thoroughly rethought; nonetheless, his questions remain relevant.²⁷ My approach is equally indebted to the work of medievalists who have pioneered study of medieval texts using postcolonial and poststructural approaches, and who have made the case for the importance of translation in this period: David Abulafia, Simon Gaunt, Jane Gilbert, Serge Lusignan, Sylvia Huot, Sharon Kinoshita, the *Translations Médiévales* volumes and Emma Campbell and Bob Mills's recent volume of essays, *Rethinking Medieval Translation*.

Returning briefly to Marie de France, her prologue to the *Lais* indicates the kinds of questions that certain medieval texts raise, in particular, when read alongside studies of transnational identities, such as those of Mary Louise Pratt and Emily Apter.

Ki Deus ad duné esciënce
 E de parler bon' eloquence,
 Ne s'en deit taisir ne celer,
 Ainz se deit volunters mustrer. (ll. 1-4)
 [Whoever God has given understanding, and eloquence in speaking, should not be quiet or hide it, but rather should show him or herself willingly.]

Pur ceo començai a penser
 De aukune bone estoire faire
 E de latin en romaunz traire;
 Mais ne me fust guaires de pris
 Itant s'en sunt altre entremis.
 Des lais pensai qu'oïz aveie. (ll. 28-32)
 [Because of this, I began to think of making some good story, and translating from Latin to French; but this wasn't prized at all, because so many others have undertaken this. I thought of the *lais* that I had heard.]

Marie decides that the ground of translating between French and Latin is overworked, and opens up another linguistic relation with French. Mary Louise

²⁷ Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* (London: Routledge, 1998).

Pratt's concept of contact zones as 'social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination – like colonialism, slavery or their aftermaths' is useful for analysis of this passage; furthermore, Emily Apter's notion of the 'translation zone' smartly nuances this concept to combine physical and linguistic spaces.²⁸ Translation is a vital form of contact, for both translators and readers or listeners, and arguably, the defining feature of the contact zone. Marie creates a new, primarily textual contact zone for French, that of Breton and its *lais*. This 'textual space [...] is marked as different from the learned sphere of the Latinate'; Marie might very well be able to create it herself in relation to her French.²⁹ Though Latin may be obscure to some Francophone readers, reading it is nonetheless a widespread activity, whereas Breton potentially represents something more inaccessible – without the translation – to Francophone readers who do not live near Brittany, who have not already heard these stories. One way to designate stories coming from a particular cultural past, but also to hide that past, is to claim to have translated them.³⁰ References to translation therefore abound throughout Marie's text.

This analysis hints at the complex connections Marie establishes between translation and textual production in these few lines, which suggests that Old French concepts of translation might be worth closer scrutiny in their own right,

²⁸ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 4; Emily Apter, *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 5-6.

²⁹ *Retelling the Tale*, p. 59; see Emanuel J. Mickel, 'Antiquities in Marie's *Lais*', in *In Quest of Marie de France: A Twelfth-Century Poet*, ed. by Chantal A. Maréchal (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), pp. 123-37 (p. 135).

³⁰ See Eva Rosenn, 'The Sexual and Textual Politics of Marie's Poetics', in *Quest*, ed. by Maréchal, pp. 225-42 (pp. 226-7) on 'obfuscation and disclosure'.

not only in relation to their sources or their Latin scholastic counterparts. Thus, throughout this thesis, I ask, how did these writers conceive of translation? And from where did they draw their concepts?

Translator, retraire, metre en roman and trover: definitions

To begin answering these questions, I first examine the usage for four terms: *translator*, *retraire/traire*, *trouver* and *metre en escrit*. Only the first has been previously widely thought to mean translation, and although it is accepted that the latter three signify processes of textual production, I suggest that they too have connotations of translation borne out by medieval usage. This discussion is selective, but tracing these four terms' meanings is a useful starting point because it suggests how writers might have understood them in relation to earlier usage, both in French and in Latin. To this end, I further examine how three Latin writers define *translatio*, to indicate the debates to which medieval French translators might well be responding either directly or indirectly.³¹ I therefore discuss the definition of *translatio* offered by the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* formerly attributed to Cicero, the 'primary text' for teaching rhetoric in the Middle Ages; Jerome's prefatory epistles to his translation of Genesis, which were transmitted in 'le plus grand nombre des manuscrits' of the Vulgate Bible in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, including those after the University of Paris Bible reforms; and finally, Otto of Freising's *translatio imperii et studii*, a twelfth-century theorisation of physical translation of empire and learning – and thus of texts – as the dominant

³¹ See Karen Pratt, 'Medieval Attitudes', in *Medieval Translator II*, ed. by Ellis, pp. 1-2.

historical narrative.³² This discussion highlights the connection between translation and imaginative writing: *translatio* is frequently used in these earlier texts to signify metaphor. Thus this close conceptual link has long-standing and well-known medieval precedent. In order to understand some of the implications of such a connection, I engage with Jacques Derrida's sustained reflections on translation from his *Le Monolinguisme de l'autre*, placing them in relation to the prologue of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britannie*.³³ I then situate the notion of translation outlined by Derrida in relation to concepts that I discuss later in the thesis: secondary creation, hybridity, multilingualism and hospitality. This discussion of both the semantic range of phrases signifying translation and commentaries upon translation permits me to proceed to outline the argument of this thesis and its rationale.

The Old French dictionary Tobler-Lommatzsch has a wealth of examples for *translater* and its substantive cognate, *translacion*.³⁴ It offers three definitions – two principally physical and one linguistic – for *translater*. Most specifically, in a usage equivalent to translation's predominant current meaning, *translater* is used to denote the transposition of material from a source into a target language,

³² Donald A. Russell, 'Introduction', to Quintilian, *The Orator's Education*, ed. by Jeffrey Henderson and trans. by Donald A. Russell, 5 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), I, pp. 1-29 (p. 22); Samuel Berger, *Les Préfaces jointes aux livres de la Bible dans les manuscrits de la Vulgate* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1902), p. 33. *Rhétorique à Herennius*, ed. and trans. by Guy Achard (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1989); Jerome, *The Middle English Bible: Prefatory Epistles of St Jerome*, ed. by Conrad Lindberg (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1978); further citations will be given in parentheses within the text by book and line number.

³³ Jacques Derrida, *Le Monolinguisme de l'autre ou la prothèse de l'origine* (Paris: Galilée, 1996); further references to this edition are given in parentheses within the text by page number; Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain: An Edition and Translation of 'De Gestis Britonum' (Historia Regum Britanniae)*, ed. by Michael D. Reeve and trans. by Neil Wright (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007). Further references to this edition are given in parentheses within the text by book, paragraph and line numbers.

³⁴ *TL*, X (1976), col. 530, l. 8-col. 53, l. 25; col. 529, ll. 31-46.

with the result that the translation at least takes written form. *Translator* is used to refer to translation into Latin, as in the following example, which describes translation of an originally Greek text from Arabic:

Ceste marguerite de Philosophie [Aristotle's book] *Secretum Secretorum* fut
transcrite et translatee de la langue arabique an la langue latine.³⁵
[This pearl of Philosophy, *The Secret of Secrets*, was transcribed and translated
from the Arabic language into the French language.]

Here translation and transcription are noted together, perhaps because of the difference in alphabets. *Translator* is also frequently used to describe translation from Latin into French, as in the following example from *Baudouin de Sebourg*:

Ceste canchon, signour, doit bien estre prisie
Car translatez fu en divine clergie
Du Latin en Romans, nel tenez a folie.³⁶
[This song, *signour*, should be valued highly, for it was translated through divine
book-learning from Latin into the vernacular; do not think it is frivolous.]

This example notes that the translator is divinely inspired.³⁷ Justifying translation through biblical and Augustinian tropes of spreading the word – rather than hiding learning – is central to the twelfth century's understanding of the purpose of translation. Similar justifications occur in the *Roman de Troie*, an instance I examine in my first chapter, Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligès*, Marie de France's *Lais* and Gautier d'Arras's *Eracle*.

Furthermore, *translator* can focus attention on the process of translation. Tobler-Lommatzsch quotes two examples from the roughly contemporary Wace's *Roman de Rou* and Marie de France's *Fables* which demonstrate this emphasis:

³⁵ *TL*, X (1976), col. 531, ll. 2-6.

³⁶ *TL*, X (1976), col. 531, ll. 18-20.

³⁷ On divine *translatio*, see Emma Campbell, 'The Ethics of *Translatio* in Rutebeuf's *Miracle de Théophile*', in *Rethinking Medieval Translation*, ed. by Campbell and Mills, pp. 107-124 (esp. pp. 112-19).

Livres escrire e translater, faire romanz e serventeis.³⁸
[To write books and translate, make romances [or books in the vernacular] and
sirventes.]

Esope escrist a sun mestre,
Ki bien conut lui et son estre,
Unes fables, qu'il ot trovees
De Griu en Latin translatees.³⁹
[Esope wrote some fables, which he had 'found' and translated from Greek into
Latin, in the style of his master, whose nature and being he knew very well.]

In the first list, translation is conceptualised as one of several forms of vernacular textual production, delineated – but also associated with – the act of writing, and equally from writing romances and *sirventes*, an Occitan form brought into French. The second example introduces *trouver*, whose double meaning is a touchstone for understanding the close relationship between reading, translating and creative production in this period. It means to find, discover or invent: it can refer to both the act of 'ausgesagt, geschrieben finden', finding knowledge through reading, and 'dichten (auch musik. komponieren)', or the creative act of composition, its more frequent usage.⁴⁰ In this way, the third example shows Aesop not only writing to imitate 'sun mestre', but equally, finding or reading the fables and then translating them into Latin. A reading which accommodates Aesop's writing in Greek might suggest that he wrote the fables and then translated them into Latin. These lines would therefore credit Aesop with both Greek composition and Latin translations, occluding the identity of the Latin translator. Since no-one read Greek in Western Europe in the medieval period, Marie might have simply ascribed the Latin translations to Aesop, as well as his

³⁸ *TL*, X (1976), col. 530, ll. 39-40.

³⁹ *TL*, X (1976), col. 530, ll. 51-col. 531, l. 1; I have expanded the quotation from *Fables*, ed. by Harriet Spiegel, ll. 17-20.

⁴⁰ *TL*, X (1976), col. 697, ll. 2-9; col. 694, l. 42-col. 695, l. 32.

Greek writings. In this way the Latin translations themselves, which Marie works from, share the authorial status of the Greek. These examples thus conceptualise translation as a creative act, by creating slippage between translation and composition.

If translation spreads knowledge and learning, this idea is illuminating for understanding translation's significance in terms of physical movement during this period. Peter Damian-Grint suggests that this meaning is primary, particularly for historiographical texts, but linguistic *translater* has the most entries in Tobler-Lommatzsch.⁴¹ In the *FEW*, Paul Zumthor notes the use of the noun *translation* to mean 'action de déplacer un objet d'un lieu à l'autre' as 'rare' in middle French, although there are examples for *translater* (under *transférer*) with this meaning.⁴² Perhaps most usefully, Zrinka Stahuljak underlines the broad ways in which translation was understood in this period.⁴³ Tobler-Lommatzsch defines physical *translater* in two ways: 'von einem Ort nach einem andern versetzen' [to move from one place to another] and, in a reflexive usage, which features far fewer examples, 'sich versetzen, den Ort verändern' [to move o.s., to change place]. The examples can refer to simple physical movement, though these are frequently from the later medieval period, for example, this quotation from Froissart's *Chroniques*:

⁴¹ Peter Damian-Grint, *The New Historians of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance: Inventing Vernacular Authority* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1999), p. 23.

⁴² *FEW*, XIII (1967), p. 201; p. 209.

⁴³ Zrinka Stahuljak, 'Medieval Fixers: Politics of Interpreting in Western Historiography', in *Rethinking Medieval Translation*, ed. by Campbell and Mills, pp. 147-63 (p. 148).

Si fu en celle saison translates et menes en Cambresis.⁴⁴
[He was moved at that time and taken to the Cambresis.]

Further examples of *translater* describe all kinds of divinely ordained physical movement, including moving saints' bodies and, as in the following translation from Psalm 46: 2, transformation by God:

Deus a nus esperance e force [...]; Pur ceo crendrums cum serat translatee la terre
et dequassé le munt el quer de la mer.⁴⁵
[God is our refuge and strength [...]; Therefore will we not fear, though the earth
be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.]

These examples show physical movement of a spiritual nature.

Translater is not the only word used for translation in this period. *Retraire* and *traire* offer distinct metaphors for this process, although they are less widely attested than *translater* as verbs for the act of translation.⁴⁶ *Retraire* has several meanings which clearly inform its use in this way. Godefroy lists the following quotation from Marie de France's *Lai de Fresne* under 'raconter, dire', which is equally listed by Tobler-Lommatzsch under 'etw. vorbringen, mit Worten darlegen, darstellen, erzählen, erwähnen':⁴⁷

Cil que le message ot porté
A sun seignur ad tut cunté.
Quant il l'oï dire e retraire
Dolent en fu, ne sot quei faire.
[The one who carried the message told his lord everything. When he heard him
say and translate everything, he was sad, and he did not know what to do.]

Similarly, in the *Roman de Troie* prologue, Benoît de Sainte-Maure notes that a Roman teacher, Cornelius, 'de greu le torna en latin' [from Greek turned it into Latin] (l. 121). Just as Benoît claims this text to be new in French, the Greek text

⁴⁴ Godefroy, VIII (1895), p. 18.

⁴⁵ *TL*, X (1976), col. 530, ll. 13-16.

⁴⁶ See Miranda Griffin, 'Translation and Transformation in the *Ovide Moralisé*', in *Rethinking Medieval Translation*, ed. by Campbell and Mills, pp. 41-60 (p. 42) for discussion of *traire*.

⁴⁷ Godefroy, VII (1892), p. 155; *TL*, VIII (1971), col. 1162, l. 52-col. 1163, l. 1; ll. 33-5. I have extended the quotation from *TL* from *Lai de Fresne*, ll. 57-60 in *Lais*.

lay undiscovered at Athens until Cornelius found it and translated it into Latin (ll. 117-20). He then uses *retraire* to explain that he has translated his text from the Latin version:

Ceste estoire n'est pas usee
N'en guaires lieus nen est trovee:
Ja retraite ne fust ancore
Mais Beneeiz de Sainte More
L'a contruvé e fait e dit
E o sa main les moz escrit.⁴⁸
[This story is not worn out, but is hardly found/created anywhere, for it was never yet translated, but Benoît de Sainte-Maure has found it and done it and said it, and written the words with his own hand.]

His *retraire* thus acts as the final stage in this *translatio studii* of the text of the story of Troy. This history of translation – both linguistic and physical – suggests that there is indeed a strong linguistic element to *translatio studii*.

Retraire further occurs in the most famous French expression of *translatio imperii et studii*, in Chrétien de Troyes's prologue to *Cligés*.

Ceste estoire trovons escrite,
Que conter vos vuel e retreire
An un des livres de l'aumeire
Monseignor saint Pere a Biauveiz.⁴⁹
[We find this story written down, which I want to tell and translate for you, in one of the books in the library of Monseigneur Saint Peter at Beauvais.]

Whether this reference is to a real book or not, at this early date, most of the books in a monastic library would be in Latin, which suggests that Chrétien wants the reader to think that he has translated the text.⁵⁰ These examples suggest retelling of a tale that was previously in another language, and thus, that these

⁴⁸ *Roman de Troie*, ed. by Constans, ll. 129-34. Further quotations are given in parentheses within the text by line number.

⁴⁹ *TL*, VIII (1971), col. 1163, ll. 6-9; see Zink, 'Mutation', pp. 19-20.

⁵⁰ See Claude Buridant, 'Esquisse d'une traductologie au Moyen Âge', in *Translations médiévales: cinq siècles de la traduction en français au moyen âge*, ed. by Claudio Galderisi, 3 vols (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), I, pp. 325-81 (pp. 372-7) for an overview of Latin as a language of translation.

writers are translating their texts. I therefore suggest that *retraire* can implicitly signify the act of composing a translation.

Perhaps *retraire*'s literal and figurative senses of 'etw. zurückziehen, zurücknehmen' and their reflexive forms [to retreat or to pull out] or 'etw. ablegen, wieder ausziehen' [to put down, to give up, to pull out] might explain why this word is used for translation.⁵¹ It contains the idea of movement to produce something that may have been hidden. The use of *retraire* to signify translation makes sense when combined with its other meanings. 'Etw. deuten, auslegen' [to interpret or lay out] offers examples of translation from prophecy into a historical register, as in Aye d'Avignon's 'Sez tu songe retraire?' [Do you know how to interpret a dream?].⁵² This meaning indeed parallels the process of translation from a source language, that only a prophet or translator can understand, into a text intelligible to a target audience. *Retraire* as 'ähneln' [to resemble] suggests the similarities between two different groups, yet its meanings of pulling out or retreating equally offer connotations of hostility. These opposite meanings indicate the ambiguity of contact zones, often marked by war or struggle as well as hospitality and peace.⁵³ Translation often takes place within one of these contact zones, and forms a textual contact zone itself. Though I do not suggest that all these meanings are present in every single use of *retraire*, its polyvalence suggests the tensions within the act of translation. Spreading knowledge brings its own power dynamics; Antoine Berman notes the two dominant forms of translation are ethnocentric and hypertextual, or forming a new

⁵¹ *TL*, VIII (1971), col. 1159, l. 11-col. 1160, l. 13; col. 1160, ll. 39-45.

⁵² *TL*, VIII (1971), col. 1166, l. 11-col. 1167, l. 2 (ll. 11-12).

⁵³ Mary Louise Pratt, p. 4.

text from another ‘par un lien d’engendrement libre’.⁵⁴ The translation can replace and even usurp the source text.

Hence the polyvalence of *retraire* points to the frequently paradoxical impetus to translate. It first offers a physical image of the movement of translation, as meaning is pulled out of a text. To this concrete sense are joined those of conflict and defeat, as well as interpretation of prophecy, resemblance and telling stories. These diverse meanings thus shape *retraire* as meaning ‘to translate’. Taken together, they emphasise the importance of retelling in order to represent the source text best, and the difficulty with which that act is fraught. One crucial instance of the importance of translation is the interpretation of prophecy, which always has a divine source. In this way, *retraire* may share divine connotations with *translater*, although it is used in less overtly Christian contexts and often in secular ones.

Metre en escrit envisages the movement of translation, but it shows meaning being put into a text rather than pulled out of it.⁵⁵ The clearest example of this metaphor for translation comes from *Lancelot do Lac*.

Et furent mandé li clerc qui metoient an escrit les proeces as conpaignons de la maison lo roi. Si estoient quatre, si avoit non li uns Arodiens de Coloigne, et li secons Tontamidez de Vernax, et li tierz Thomas de Tolete, et li quarz Sapiens de Baudas. Cil quatre mestoient en escrit qanque li compaignon lo roi faisoient d’armes, si mistrent en escrit les aventures monseignor Gauvain tot avant. (p. 571, ll. 20-6)

[And the clerks were sent for, who put the brave deeds of the companions of the King’s house into writing. There were four of them: the first was called Arodiens de Coloigne, the second Tontamidez de Vernax [Vernas], and the third Thomas de Tolete [Toledo] and the fourth Sapiens de Baudas [Baghdad]. These four put all the deeds at arms that the king’s companions did into writing, and they put monseignor Gauvain’s adventures into writing first.]

⁵⁴ Berman, p. 29, p. 36.

⁵⁵ See also Clanchy’s discussion of *metre en roman*, pp. 218-19.

These lines show the reverse image from *retraire*: the content of oral tales is put into the form of writing, rather than extricated from it. They also suggest a scene of translation: the four clerks come from all over Europe and the Middle East, which would mean that they were writing in a common language, most likely Latin, but perhaps transcribing from the knights' oral accounts, in an unspecified language which would almost certainly be a vernacular. The *Queste del Saint Graal* equally ends with a history of its own transmission that begins with Boors telling the adventures

telles come il les avoit veues, si furent mises en escrit et gardees en l'almeire de Salebieres, dont Mestre Gautier Map les trest a fere son livre del Seint Graal por l'amor del roi Henri son seignor, qui fist l'estoire translater de latin en françois.⁵⁶
[as he had seen them, so they were put into writing and kept in the *aumaire* at Salisbury, from which Mestre Gautier Map took them to make his book of the Holy Grail for the love of his lord King Henry, who had the story translated from Latin into French.]

Here, *mettre en escrit* is the first stage in a history of transmission and adaptation: *mettre en escrit* and *treire* here could both refer to an act of translation, just as the more explicit *translater* does. All three describe a process of textual transmission, whether from Latin into French or from an unspecified oral language of the text into Latin. Though their visions of translation are distinct, strikingly, *mettre en escrit* describes translation alongside *treire* in this example. *Mettre en escrit* often refers to the transmission of implicitly oral narrative into writing. In this way, it can refer to translation, and especially to transmission from a spoken language into Latin.

Trouver means to find or discover. As noted earlier in relation to the quotation from the prologue to the *Roman de Troie*, Tobler-Lommatzsch observes

⁵⁶ *Queste*, p. 279, l. 22-p. 280, l. 3.

that it refers to both the act of finding knowledge through reading, and the creative act of composition, its more frequently attested usage.⁵⁷ According to the *FEW*, its Latin root *tropare* has two meanings, the first of which, ‘erfinden, erdichten’ [to invent’ or ‘to make up], preceded its second, ‘finden’ [to find].⁵⁸ This chronology indicates that users calqued the physical sense of *tropare* on the idea of literary creation, which in turn was then informed by that word’s use for the physical act of finding.

The *FEW* notes *controver*, its compound, also shares its roots in the Latin *tropare*, although it also remarks ‘ob *tropare* und *contropare* wirklich zugleich entstanden sind, muss dahingestellt bleiben. *Tropare* könnte sehr wohl auch sekundär nach *contropare* gebildet worden sein’.⁵⁹ Tobler-Lommatzsch defines *controver* in three ways: ‘ausdenken, erfinden’ [to dream up, to invent]; ‘dichterisch erfinden’ [to invent in a literary sense]; ‘lügnerisch aussinnen, fälschlich erfinden’ [to invent mendaciously].⁶⁰ In the quotation from Benoît, an old book is neither found nor written. This example hints at the significance of *trover* and *controver* as a marker of translation, which particularly emphasises its capacity to reveal knowledge that has been hidden away or obscured in another language. Indeed, the *FEW*’s leading definition for *tropare* is ‘allegorisch auslegen’, the explication of allegory.⁶¹

As is clear from this discussion, the usage of all these terms was shaped in relation to Latin, which had been the dominant written language in Western

⁵⁷ *TL*, X (1976), col. 697, ll. 2-9; col. 694, l. 42-col. 695, l. 32.

⁵⁸ *FEW*, XIII (1967), p. 322.

⁵⁹ *FEW*, XIII (1967), p. 322.

⁶⁰ *TL*, II (1936), col. 812, l. 17-col. 813, l. 6.

⁶¹ *FEW*, XIII (1967), p. 318.

Europe for centuries, and would remain so in certain milieux for years to come.

The vernaculars were heirs to long traditions of translation into Latin from Greek, Arabic and Hebrew, and reflection on those processes: François Bérrier notes that the practice of prefacing a translation with a prologue ‘remonte au moins à Ciceron’.⁶² I thus propose a brief consideration of medieval French examples in relation to three texts, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Jerome’s late fourth-century *Prefatory Epistles* and Otto of Freising’s *Two Cities* (1146).

The *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, which was formerly attributed to Cicero, discusses two relevant rhetorical tropes. *Interpretatio* refers to translation in the medieval and modern senses of putting words from one language into another, whereas *translatio* is a literal translation of the Greek μετάφορ, or carrying over: the substitution of one word for another within the same language. In his *De Oratore*, Cicero uses ‘transferendi verbi’ to describe this process; *translatio* is closely related to *transfero*, as it is drawn from its past participle, *latum*.⁶³ This usage suggests that *translatio* is first used in Latin to signify a form of figurative reading, which Quintilian also explains thus in his *Institutio Oratoria*. As John A. Alford has noted, tropes ‘all involve some kind of *translatio* or transference of

⁶² François Bérrier, ‘La Traduction en français’, in *Grundriss der Romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters, VIII/1: La Littérature française aux XIVe et XVe siècles*, ed. by Hans Robert Jauss, Erich Köhler, Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and Ulrich Mölk, assisted by Jean Frappier, Daniel Poirion and Aurelio Roncaglia (Heidelberg: Winter, 1988), pp. 219-65 (p. 246). See Copeland, *Rhetoric* for a thoroughgoing examination of the history of translation from Rome to the Middle Ages, esp. pp. 37-62 on the movement from Roman to medieval concepts of translation.

⁶³ Cicero, *De Oratore, Book III* in *De Oratore III, De Fato, Paradoxa Stoicorum, Partitiones Oratoriae*, trans. by H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942), pp. 2-185 (pp. 120-2, para. 155); for a discussion of Cicero’s usage of metaphor and allegory, see Shane Butler, *The Matter of the Page: Essays In Search of Medieval and Modern Authors* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), p. 66.

meaning'.⁶⁴ The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* defines the trope of *translatio* as taking place

cum uerbum in quandam rem transferetur ex alia re, quod propter similitudinem recte uidebitur posse transferri.⁶⁵
[when a word is transferred from one thing to another, because the resemblance between the two seems to allow the transfer to be made.]

This rhetorical treatise with classical origins, which enjoyed a resurgence of popularity in the eleventh century, demonstrates that translation has a clear Latin cognate, which designates a figural process.⁶⁶ Thus translation is identified with metaphor, or the processes of carrying over meaning from one sign to another. Translation therefore begins to be theorised in Latin as an encompassing – and creative – process that combines reading and writing. This closely related but increasingly distinct trope of intralingual translation informs ideas of translation throughout its history, and indeed marks the gradual development of the term to refer primarily to interlingual processes. Translation is therefore a form of reading and a topos – etymologically, a place – of substitution and of carrying over: a turning of language that carries meaning from one place to another, whether within a language or between them. Donatus, who was amongst the ‘standard texts’ for grammar schools, describes it thus: ‘metaphora est rerum verborumque translatio’ [A metaphor is a transfer among things and words].⁶⁷ This definition is subsequently drawn upon by Isidore of Seville and Matthieu de Vendôme in his

⁶⁴ John A. Alford, ‘The Grammatical Metaphor: A Survey of Its Use in the Middle Ages’, *Speculum*, 57 (1982), 728-60 (p. 752).

⁶⁵ *Rhétorique à Herennius*, IV: 45.

⁶⁶ Achard, ‘Introduction’, to *Rhétorique à Herennius*, pp. v-liii (p. v).

⁶⁷ Janet Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers 1350-1400* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), p. 27; see Martin Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture: ‘Grammatica’ and Literary Theory 350-1100* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 228; Donatus, ‘Ars Grammatica’ in *Grammatici Latini*, ed. by Heinrich Keil, 8 vols (Leipzig: Teubner, 1855-1880), IV (1864), pp. 353-402 (p. 399, l. 17; III, 6).

twelfth-century *Ars Versificatoria*, who both state ‘*metaphora est verbi alicuius usurpata translatio*’ [metaphor is a word used for transfer].⁶⁸ Geoffroi de Vinsauf’s *Poetria Nova*, written just after 1200, uses *transfero* in exactly this manner, to describe the process of metaphor: ‘*Si sit homo de quo fit sermo, transferor ad rem | Expressae similem*’ [If a man is to be depicted by a word, then I transfer that expression to a similar thing].⁶⁹

Four centuries after the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, a seminal work of translation transformed Christianity: Jerome’s Vulgate Bible ‘*iuxta Hebraeos*’.⁷⁰ It ‘went against three hundred years of tradition’, because he translated directly from the Hebrew into Latin, rather than from Greek translations.⁷¹ He reflects at length on translation in the first of his prefatory epistles, which later together formed the preface to the Wycliffite Bible, an indicator of its popularity during the medieval period, and indeed, Werner Goetz charts Jerome’s introduction of phrases like ‘*imperio translato*’.⁷² Scenarios of linguistic and physical translation intertwine in this text to provide a context for Jerome to discuss his own rationale for translating, underpinned by his conviction that translation is indeed perfectible. Hence, he begins with an anecdote about textual translation that

⁶⁸ Isidore of Seville, *Etimologías: edición bilingüe*, ed. by José Oroz Reta and Manuel-A. Marcos Casquero, 2 vols (Madrid: Biblioteca de autores christianos, 1993-94), I (1993), 1, 37: 2; Matthieu de Vendôme, ‘*Ars Versificatoria*’ in *Les Arts poétiques du XII^e et XIII^e siècle*, ed. by Edmond Faral (Paris: Champion, 1924), pp. 106-93 (3: 19).

⁶⁹ Geoffroi de Vinsauf, ‘*Poetria Nova*’, in *Arts poétiques*, pp. 194-262 (ll. 766-7).

⁷⁰ Adam Kamesar, *Jerome, Greek Scholarship and the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 193.

⁷¹ Kamesar, p. 193; Copeland, ‘The Fortunes of “Non Verbum Pro Verbo”’: Or, Why Jerome Is Not a Ciceronian’, in *The Medieval Translator*, ed. by Ellis, pp. 15-35 examines Jerome’s relation to Cicero in detail.

⁷² Werner Goetz, *Translatio Imperii* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1958), p. 30, and pp. 30-6 on the church fathers’ reception of Jerome’s ideas; Conrad Lindberg, ‘From Jerome to Wyclif: An Experiment in Translation: The First Prologue’, *Studia Neophilologica*, 63 (1991), 143-45 (p. 143).

reveals stories of men making journeys in order to hold multilingual conversations to share and gain knowledge:

Legimus in veteribus historiis quosdam lustrasse provincias, novos adisse populos, mare transisse, ut eos quos ex libris noverant coram quoque viderent. (I, ll. 10-14)

[We have read in old stories that some men have travelled about provinces, and that they have gone to new peoples and that they have crossed the sea, so that they could see those who they knew from books.]

Thus he opens with searches for origins: the men he depicts move in order to find the sources of the books they know. He proceeds to introduce a list of classical philosophers who have each become ‘peregrinus atque discipulus, malens aliena verecunde discere quam sua impudenter ingerere’ [a pilgrim and a disciple, preferring to learn humbly from others’ studies than to preach his own immodestly] (I, ll. 20-2).

Jerome begins his Epistle, therefore, with an implicit reference to reading and learning in another language.⁷³ He lists Pythagoras and Plato going to find other philosophers; the disciples of Titus Livius coming to Rome from the furthest coasts of France and Spain (I, ll. 28-9); Apollonius going to India to seek out Hiarch and drink from Tantalus’s well (I, ll. 35-45), before continuing to Ethiopia to see the Gymnosophists (I, ll. 46-51). He finishes this section by noting the eight volumes, written by Philostratus (I, ll. 54-5), which contain Apollonius’s adventures. This old story would have required Jerome to read in translation: Philostratus’s *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* is in Greek. The *veteres historiae* he mentions were probably in Greek – or possibly in Latin translation – and relate stories of Greek philosophers; they locate the passage immediately within a

⁷³ On the invisibility of translation in this period, see Robert Mills, ‘Invisible Translation, Language Difference and the Scandal of Becket’s Mother’, in *Rethinking Medieval Translation*, ed. by Campbell and Mills, pp. 125-46.

context of multilingual transmission. This setting mirrors the stories those books tell: of philosophers and students who have read about foreign scholars, and then seek them out physically in order to enter into dialogue with them. These stories suggest that translation is essential to the exchange of knowledge, both because the conversations that result from the journeys the Greek philosophers make would have required at least one party to speak in a second language and because translation would have been required for them to retransmit their texts.

This first Epistle highlights the close links between physical movement and linguistic translation. Here, sources of knowledge are static whilst the learner is mobile. The association of knowledge with travel, just as the philosophers themselves go to seek learning, suggests a hierarchical society, where only a few can leave to embark on such quests for knowledge. In this way, the ability to translate certain languages as well as to travel can become a kind of esoteric learning reserved for a few, though this act can also serve to spread knowledge more widely. Reading and translating other languages can become a form of (sometimes metaphorical) travel, as the dual physical and linguistic sides of translation indicate.

Moreover, Jerome later outlines his strong belief in translation's capacity to spread knowledge. He thinks that such progress can be made through translation that even the understanding of some of the pagan wise men who travelled to find knowledge, like Plato (V, ll. 1-3), could be surpassed. He develops an evolutionary view of translation as able to achieve perfection. In

doing so, he draws on imagery of speaking God's wisdom, previously hidden, from 1 Corinthians 2: 7 and Wisdom 6: 22-24.⁷⁴

Loquitur Dei sapientiam in mysterio absconditam. (V, ll. 11-12)
[I speak of the wisdom of God hidden in mystery]

Jerome is profoundly optimistic about the possibility of spreading knowledge through translation, an act which parallels that of the prophet and the interpreter. He thus locates his translation within a long tradition that draws on both classical and biblical texts. He contrasts worldly, practical translation with the mystical act of prophecy, but observes that the two share structures of transmission.

Such an attempt to justify translation and to create traditions is evident within later writing, in Latin and especially in the vernacular. To take two examples, Benoît de Sainte-Maure places himself within a seemingly unbroken *translatio studii* originating with an eyewitness to the Trojan war, who does, nonetheless, write in Greek; on the other hand, Marie de France distances herself from such traditions and claims what readers will value is the translation of orally transmitted Breton tales. Eva Rosenn notes that Marie 'includes what she has rejected' by extensively referring to motifs from the *romans antiques*.⁷⁵ Marie's rhetoric of orality draws attention to the shared and fraught transmission of these tales, in which titles, and thus interpretations of the stories, are frequently disputed (see, for example, *Le Chaitivel* and *Eliduc*).

Many medieval texts have much to say on the subject of translation, and often designate themselves as such. One paradigmatic text is Otto of Freising's *Two Cities*, which is credited with first drawing the existing notions of *translatio*

⁷⁴ See Goez, pp. 4-17 on biblical influences on the doctrine of *translatio imperii*.

⁷⁵ Rosenn, 'Sexual and Textual Politics', in *Quest*, ed. by Maréchal, p. 237; see pp. 229-35 for a discussion of the ways in which Marie draws on the *romans antiques*.

imperii and *studii* together; some of his contemporaries, including Geoffrey of Monmouth and Wace, with their sketches of the Britons descended from Troy, and soon after, Chrétien de Troyes in his *Cligès*, were thinking along similar lines.⁷⁶ Otto's life itself is a story of translation: born in Germany, he studied in Paris before his first appointment as abbot of Morimund in Champagne, then becoming Bishop of Freising, and later going on crusade, just after writing the *Two Cities*.⁷⁷ He creates a history of the movement of power within which learning resides, offering

a sketch of the transfer of human science from East to West – from Babylonia and Egypt, through Greece and Rome to the France and Spain of his own day.⁷⁸

As John Baldwin observes, *translatio studii* thus draws a parallel with apostolic succession:

the papacy fashioned a parallel doctrine, the *translatio imperii*, to explain the transferral of imperial authority from the Roman emperors to Charlemagne and thence to the German kings.⁷⁹

Many vernacular writers certainly used this narrative to create the history of their languages, for example, *Athis et Prophilius* explores earlier stages of a *translatio studii et imperii*. The growth of vernacular writing demanded explanation, and Otto's brought together movement of empire with that of learning.

Translatio imperii et studii marks both translation's universalising impetus and its sense of secondariness, always fallen from its origins, but always moving,

⁷⁶ See Damian-Grint, p. 23, pp. 25-7 on Wace and *translatio*; on *Cligès*, see Freeman.

⁷⁷ Charles C. Mierow, 'Introduction', to Otto of Freising, *The Two Cities: A Chronicle of Universal History to the Year 1146 A. D.*, ed. by Austin P. Evans and Charles Knapp and trans. by Charles C. Mierow (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928), pp. 1-84 (pp. 11-16).

⁷⁸ Robert E. Lerner, 'Pertransibunt Plurimi: Reading Daniel to Transgress Authority', in *Knowledge, Discipline and Power in the Middle Ages: Essays in honour of David Luscombe*, ed. by Joseph Canning, Edmund King and Martial Staub (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 7-28 (p. 16).

⁷⁹ John Baldwin, 'Masters at Paris from 1179-1215: A Social Perspective', in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. by Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable with Carol D. Lanham (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 138-72 (p. 161).

even if ‘a principle of steady improvement is obviously lacking’ from Otto’s account.⁸⁰ This doctrine, which identifies Western Europe as the current centre of learning and power, developed from civilisations in the East, is essential to understand medieval Western European attitudes to translation, whether expressed in Latin or in a vernacular like French. Translation’s importance within the curriculum and the vast corpus of extant translations indicate that it was central to the transfer of knowledge in this period.⁸¹

Medieval French writers thus drew on centuries of theorisation of translation, which frequently connected physical movement and linguistic translation, while using a newly written vernacular. These links could take many forms: Jerome’s journeys for knowledge implied linguistic translation, and he urged his students to learn other languages so that they might come to their own readings, opening up new contact zones, for example with Hebrew, more widely. Roughly a thousand years later, the concept of *translatio imperii et studii*, created just as textual production in medieval vernaculars including French, was burgeoning, places translation as a dominant historical narrative.

Le Monolinguisme de l’autre and related frameworks

My analysis of medieval French concepts of translation is informed by Jacques Derrida’s writings on that subject, which merit testing out in a period frequently noted for its alterity from the modern. This process enables me to establish the

⁸⁰ Lerner, ‘Pertransibunt Plurimi’, in *Knowledge, Discipline and Power*, ed. by Canning et al, p. 16.

⁸¹ Cinzia Pignatelli, ‘Distribution géo-linguistique des traductions et de leurs manuscrits’, in *Translations médiévales*, ed. by Galderisi, I, pp. 547-67 underlines the vast body of texts in Latin; Joëlle Ducos, ‘La traduction au confluent des cultures classiques et arabes’, pp. 127-46 in the same volume, highlights Latin’s role as an intermediary language.

particularities of translation in the medieval period, as well as which aspects of those cultural practices continue.⁸² Derrida does not write from the standpoint of a medievalist; rather, his discussion arises from his reflections on his personal past as an Algerian Jew who became stateless overnight owing to a decision made hundreds of miles away by the Vichy government. Nonetheless, his experiences of migration and statelessness in the modern colonial period suggest some analogies with the conditions of production for certain medieval writers, and to the conditions they frequently describe in their Trojan fictions. My starting point is therefore Geoffrey of Monmouth's prologue to his *Historia Regum Britannie*, because he posits his history, which chronicles the successive migrations to and from Britain, including an invasion by the descendants of the Trojans, as a translation. This rhetorical move anticipates Derrida's understanding of language production as translation. Furthermore, examining Geoffrey's text alongside *Le Monolinguisme de l'autre* raises questions which animate this thesis about translation's connections with other concepts, in particular that of Derrida's *avant-première langue*. In order to address these, I first offer a perspective on translation as a form of secondary creation, before examining it in relation to multilingualism, which I suggest is a necessary condition of translating, but not of reading a translation: a brief examination indicates the motives for reading translations are diverse. I aim to draw the concepts and phenomena of multilingualism and translation together with a suggestion that they are both forms of hybridity. Such an overview of the theoretical concepts underpinning this

⁸² David Trotter, 'Introduction', to *Multilingualism in Later Medieval Britain*, ed. by David Trotter (Cambridge: Brewer, 2000), pp. 2-5 (p. 5).

thesis permits me finally to situate translation in relation to the cultural act of hospitality, which I propose both demands and forestalls translation.

In the prologue to his *Historia Regum Britannie*, Geoffrey of Monmouth states that a friend of his, Walter of Oxford, has persuaded him to translate the chronicle which follows, from a book he has given him:

Agresti tamen stilo propiisque calamis contentus codicem illum in Latinum sermonem transferre curavi.
[I was persuaded by his request to translate the book into Latin in a rustic style, reliant on my own reed pipe.] (2, ll. 13-15)

Walter is ‘in exoticis hystoriis eruditus’ [learned in exotic histories] (2, l. 7).⁸³ He gives Geoffrey just the narrative of the history of the Britons that he has been wishing for in the opening lines (1, ll. 1-6), in the shape of a ‘Britannici sermonis librum uetustissimum’ [a very old book in the British tongue] (Prologue, para. 2, ll. 9-10), which has never been identified with an extant text. R. William Leckie notes this kind of opening as a topos, an approach perhaps modelled on the series of topoi offered by Ernst Curtius, and which implies that it is not worth examining beyond the assumption that Geoffrey knew his commonplaces well.⁸⁴ This turn of phrase is not rare, but it does merit longer consideration: it is a complex index of Geoffrey’s conceptualization of his own textual production. This short passage thus raises a number of important questions about the process that led to Geoffrey

⁸³ H. E. Salter, ‘Geoffrey of Monmouth and Oxford’, *English Historical Review*, 34 (1919), 382-5 notes that Geoffrey witnesses seven charters, of which two are alongside a Walter. See also Michael D. Reeve, ‘Introduction’, to *The History of the Kings of Britain*, pp. vii-lxxvi (p. vii) for a critique of this article.

⁸⁴ R. William Leckie, *The Passage of Dominion: Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Periodization of Insular History in the Twelfth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), p. 132, n. 64; J. S. P. Tatlock, *The Legendary History of Britain: Geoffrey of Monmouth’s Historia Regum Britannie and Its Early Vernacular Versions* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1950), p. 424 ‘pass[es] over false origins alleged for romances and books of edification from the middle ages to modern days’ to note Dares Phrygius’s opening also as a ‘cock-and-bull story’. Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. by Willard A. Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953; repr. 1990).

writing. First, what is at stake aesthetically in the deliberate presentation of writing as translation? How does this presentation shed light on textual production? And thus, how does a reader respond to a text that presents itself as translation from an unreachable source in an unreadable language that is foreign to the writer himself, but seemingly native to the land in which he lives?

One way to respond to these questions is opened up by the conceptual framework Jacques Derrida offers in his *Monolinguisme de l'autre*, which draws on Benjamin's idea of translation as a mode, to suggest that translation is much more thoroughgoing than a technical process.⁸⁵ Such a discussion equally brings Derrida's ideas into closer focus. He argues that all language is a form of translation, and formulates this hypothesis in several ways to tease out its consequences, the first of which is 'Je n'ai qu'une langue, or ce n'est pas la mienne' (p. 15). Derrida justifies his discussion of *monolinguisme* by suggesting that we are all really monolingual, because even multilingual speakers have a preference for one language when they express themselves (pp. 64-5; pp. 98-9). This assertion may be true for some or even many multilingual speakers but register can override this concern because it makes the user decide upon their language (or combination of languages). Within a twelfth-century context, for example, writers from England, like Geoffrey, do not choose to write in Latin or French because of their relative linguistic proficiency, but because of a series of considerations which include, but are not limited to, geographical location, intended audience and genre conventions. Thus, Serge Lusignan remarks of the medieval clerk, 'il exerce au moins deux langues dont chacune possède des

⁸⁵ 'The Task of the Translator', p. 71.

fonctions et des registres d'expression propres'.⁸⁶ Derrida suggests that a language user is monolingual, and so cannot climb out of his or her language, but ultimately, that language does not belong to him or her. This reasoning still applies when a speaker makes a linguistic choice on grounds of register. Derrida describes his own experience of monolingualism as 'un milieu absolu [...] jamais ce[tte langue] ne sera la mienne' (pp. 13-14). Although a language user can only communicate in the omnipresent, inescapable *monolanguage*, he or she never owns that tongue. It has always already belonged to someone else first. This status of language suggests that it is shared, which has two consequences for the user. First, 'jamais on n'habitera la langue de l'autre, l'autre langue, alors que c'est la seule langue que l'on parle' (p. 104): the language user only has recourse to one language, but paradoxically, he or she will never be able to inhabit or own it completely. Thus:

il est jeté dans la traduction absolue, une traduction sans pôle de référence, sans langue originaire, sans langue de départ. Il n'y a pour lui que des langues d'arrivée. (p. 117)

Because a language user can never fully possess even their preferred language, he or she is thrown into *traduction absolue*. He or she is forced to translate from a fictional language, the *avant-première langue* (p. 118).

This language is a desired fiction.

Il s'érige même comme désir de reconstituer, de restaurer, mais en vérité d'inventer une *première langue* qui serait plutôt une *avant-première langue* destinée à traduire cette mémoire. Mais à traduire la mémoire de ce qui précisément n'a pas eu lieu, de ce qui, ayant été (l')interdit, a dû néanmoins laisser une trace. (p. 118)

⁸⁶ Serge Lusignan, *Parler vulgairement: les intellectuels et la langue française aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles* (Paris: Vrin; Montréal: Presses Universitaires de Montréal, 1986), p. 9.

This other language thus presses upon the speaker who is trying to translate into his or her target language from one that never existed, as he or she assembles words already used by others. This *avant-première langue* remains a fiction created retroactively.

What is more, Derrida equally highlights the role of desire in creating this language ‘d’arrivée, ou plutôt d’avenir, une phrase promise’ (p. 118): it is ‘spectral mais infiniment désirable’ (p. 44). *Traduction absolue* places translation – and the desire for a source – at the heart of all language acts, whether monolingual or interlingual. This idea thus theorises adaptation and rewriting not as secondary processes but as the principal mode of writing.

An analysis of Geoffrey’s prologue in the light of *traduction absolue* both illuminates that Derridean concept as well as beginning to unravel some of the rhetorical moves Geoffrey makes within his prologue to the *Historia*.⁸⁷ During the process of *traduction absolue*, the speaker or writer uses words to try to translate something that has never existed. Attempts to find the ‘lib[er] uetustissimu[s]’ [very old book] (2, l. 10) that Geoffrey claims as his source have been in vain and historians agree that Geoffrey did invent it.⁸⁸ Regardless of whether the very old book is a fiction or not, the effect of this conceit is to point to a meaning located elsewhere. Geoffrey’s book thus becomes a figure for the process of writing as translation. He has to translate the text from a language that is not his, and from a book that might well not exist. Thus the prologue implies that language acts are

⁸⁷ For a stylistic analysis of this passage, see D. R. Howlett, *The English Origins of Old French Literature* (Blackrock: Four Courts Press, 1996), pp. 36-43.

⁸⁸ For example, Leckie, p. 40; Tatlock, p. 424; Julia C. Crick, *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth. 4, Dissemination and Reception in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1991), p. 4.

always translations, regardless of whether a user is translating from an extant source text, or whether, as Michel Zink writes, ‘la préhistoire de la littérature est avant tout une création en trompe-l’oeil de la littérature elle-même’.⁸⁹ Either way, meaning is displaced as language users desire the origins of their speech or writing.

Whether this source is fictional, like the very old book, or not, a translation is always written after another work. In Latin, *transfere* can equally mean ‘to translate’, ‘to copy’, and ‘to bear across’ and ‘to put off, postpone, defer’: meaning is carried over time.⁹⁰ The translation is a form of secondary creation. From this perspective, the idea of the original comes into being at the same time as the translation: there cannot be an original without something coming after it, in relation to which it may be defined. Derrida suggests that the concept of the original ‘se donne en se modifiant’; it only comes into use when it is altered in some way.⁹¹ In using this term, I do not wish to imply that primary creations exist elsewhere, for this kind of creation cannot be accessed. In *Le Monolinguisme de l’autre*, Derrida conceptualises this idea of the unspeakable, untranslatable language as a ‘*première langue qui serait plutôt une avant-première langue*’ (p. 118), which we must invent. The term ‘secondary creation’ is not strictly accurate, therefore, but it does stress how translations present themselves in relation to an earlier work, even if this is their own fiction, a theme which is significant in my

⁸⁹ Michel Zink, *Le Moyen Âge et ses chansons ou un passé en trompe-l’oeil* (Paris: Fallois, 1996), p. 30.

⁹⁰ Lewis and Short, p. 1889, col. 3-p. 90, col. 1.

⁹¹ Derrida, ‘Des Tours de Babel’, in *Psyché: Invention de l’autre* (Paris: Galilée, 1987), pp. 203-35 (p. 217).

analysis of idols and statues in Chapter Two and my analysis of *exempla* in Chapter Three.

The image of the language user who tries to translate from an inaccessible language has implications for understanding translation in relation to multilingualism. Translation retroactively creates an imagined source text in an *avant-première langue*; the related but distinct phenomenon of multilingualism also provokes the realisation that a language user can never own a language, because he or she can be more or less proficient in one or more languages. Access to a number of signifiers highlights the imperfect nature of any one language, which can never express a perfect, complete meaning. The intersections of translation and multilingualism are examined particularly in the second half of this thesis.

Both multilingualism and translation involve the use of more than one language, but the specifics of the connections between them vary greatly according to context. Multilingualism is essential for translation, but bilingual or multilingual language users might very well not translate texts from one language into another. The linguistic abilities of readers of translations are most likely diverse, and sometimes unclear. Sometimes translations seem to have been produced for those who could not read the source language; for example, in Chapter Four, I examine the opening of the *Roman de Perceforest*, in which the writer imagines a Greek scholar arriving in Britain who translates a Greek book into Latin, because no-one else in Britain could read Greek. Nonetheless, his Latin translation is not universally accessible, which indicates another reason for a demand for translation: the Count of Hainaut has the book copied and translated

into French, not because he does not know any Latin, but because he would prefer to read it in French. This preference for one language (for all kinds of reasons, including relative competency) over another might also have sparked interest in translation; the possibility of reaching new audiences is another possible factor. This reason for translation illuminates the dissemination of one of the texts studied in Chapter Two, a Latin translation of the prose *Roman de Troie*. Guido delle Colonne's *Historia Destructionis Troiae* circulated far wider than its source, and was itself retranslated into many European vernaculars. Readers of Czech, Romanian and Catalan and many other languages may have preferred the story in their own vernacular.

Another possible model for transmission in multilingual environments is that some writers translated texts because at least some of their intended audience enjoyed reading work in different languages. John Gower may have written in French, Latin and English to satisfy different readers' preferences, perhaps partly shaped by the changing fortunes of those languages in fourteenth-century London. Nonetheless, the frequent Latin glosses and difficult epigraphs to his English-language *Confessio Amantis* indicate that he was writing for bilingual readers who may have been more fluent in Latin than English, the poem's principal language.

Both multilingualism and translation might be interpreted as instances of hybridity. This much-debated term was put forward by Homi Bhabha in his *Location of Culture*, and it offers a way to consider interactions between languages and cultures as producing new phenomena in their own right. He suggests that

[the] interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy.⁹²

For Bhabha, hybridity is a new status, produced in movement between cultures, rather than within any single one. It is equally free of the asymmetrical power relations that characterise colonialism, and he illustrates it with examples from the work of contemporary anglophone postcolonial writers such as Salman Rushdie and Toni Morrison.

However, the term ‘hybrid’ has a longer history, which Robert Young has charted, beginning in the nineteenth century, and as Simon Gaunt suggests in his discussion of the usefulness of the term hybridity for the study of medieval texts, historicising this term may yield parallels from the Middle Ages, which might in turn inform analysis of the contemporary world.⁹³ Young notes that the first dictionary definition for ‘hybrid’, in 1828, is a ‘mongrel or mule’.⁹⁴ Later, the term was applied to the ‘offspring of humans of different races [which] implied, by contrast, that the different races were different species’.⁹⁵ He further observes that the word’s

first philological use, to denote ‘a composite word formed of elements belonging to different languages’, dates from 1862.⁹⁶

He quotes an *OED* entry from 1890 which

makes the link between the linguistic and the racial explicit: ‘The Aryan languages present such indications of hybridity as would correspond with [...] racial intermixture’. (p. 6)

⁹² Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 4.

⁹³ My analysis here is indebted to Simon Gaunt, ‘Translating the Diversity of the Middle Ages: Marco Polo and Jean de Mandeville as “French” Writers’, *Australian Journal of French Studies*, 46 (2009), 235-48; Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

⁹⁴ Young, p. 6.

⁹⁵ Young, p. 9.

⁹⁶ Young, p. 6.

Young's etymological survey highlights how the hybrid connected ideas of reproduction and desire – connotations that continue to play into my analysis of the hybridity of Medea's bed in the *Roman de Troie* in Chapter One, for example – while taking on cultural significance.

It was not long before 'hybrid' was transferred from philology to linguistic analysis of literature. Mikhael Bakhtin introduces the hybrid construction, which belongs to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two 'languages', two semantic and axiological belief systems.⁹⁷

This description could indeed refer directly to a translated utterance. He complements this idea with that of hybridization:

a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter, within the area of an utterance, between two linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation, or by some other factor.⁹⁸

Bakhtin highlights the imperative to historicise the hybrid, while highlighting its linguistic usage and its process of formation, which shows words' capacity to carry several meanings, both past and present. His emphasis on the linguistic utterance shows translation's importance as a paradigm for literary creation; he is not discussing translation from one language to another but analysing representations of speech in Dickens's *Little Dorrit*.

Translation is therefore a strong example of a hybridised practice, whether in the cultural framework proposed by Homi Bhabha or the linguistic one put forward by Bakhtin sixty years earlier. First, it is a form of reproduction: most

⁹⁷ Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* ed. by Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981; first published in Russian in 1935), pp. 259-422 (p. 304).

⁹⁸ Bakhtin, p. 358.

simply, the translator puts the words of one language into another. Neither of those languages is a fixed entity, but translation is a good example of Bakhtin's 'encounter, within the area of an utterance'. In Bhabha's terms, it is a production of the 'inbetween space', which he glosses as 'the cutting edge of translation and negotiation', which 'carries the burden of the meaning of culture'.⁹⁹ This formulation both suggests that translation both divides one culture from another – perhaps by retroactively creating fixed associations – and brings the two into new contact. Bhabha does not discuss translation between languages at length, but he does touch upon “‘the foreignness of languages’ [which] becomes the inescapable cultural condition for the enunciation of the mother-tongue’”.¹⁰⁰ This formulation anticipates Derrida's suggestion in *Le Monolinguisme de l'autre* that 'la langue dite maternelle n'est jamais purement naturelle, ni propre ni habitable' (p. 112), because even the *monolanguage*, which may or may not be the mother tongue, is foreign to its user. Because Homi Bhabha does not discuss in detail the questions of language his discussion raises, hybridity is most important for analysis of translation for its renewed emphasis upon the productivity of the 'inbetween' space, which may or may not be linguistic; his questions and conceptualisations complement Derrida's analysis.

A year after *Le Monolinguisme de l'autre* was published, introducing the concept of *traduction absolue*, Derrida brought out the written version of his conversation with Anne Dufourmantelle about hospitality, *De l'Hospitalité*.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Bhabha, p. 38.

¹⁰⁰ Bhabha, p. 166.

¹⁰¹ Jacques Derrida and Anne Dufourmantelle, *De l'Hospitalité* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1997); further references are given in parentheses within the text by page number.

This text does not discuss translation explicitly, but the scenarios Derrida presents, and his analysis of them, approach similar questions from the perspective of one form of cultural encounter. In part of Chapter One of this thesis, I examine the extent to which hospitality might offer a metaphor for translation in the opening episode of the *Roman de Troie*, an analysis which is nourished by their relation in Derrida's work. In the opening pages of *De l'Hospitalité*, Derrida immediately notes the importance of language within the offer of hospitality, when a person receives an *étranger*, who is external to the community. *Étranger* could be translated as foreigner, stranger or outsider; I follow Rachel Bowlby's translation of it as foreigner, which perhaps fits well with the linguistic focus of my discussion.¹⁰² Derrida suggests that the issue of hospitality begins with two questions. He frames the first as follows:

Devons-nous demander à l'étranger de nous comprendre, de parler notre langue, à tous les sens de ce terme, dans toutes les extensions possibles, avant et afin de pouvoir l'accueillir chez nous? (p. 21)

Within the act of hospitality, he suggests that the host first establishes his or her linguistic expectations of the foreigner. His use of 'nous' invites reflection on the potential divisiveness of a decision to make the foreigner switch language to that of the host, and the division potentially already present in such a mindset. His next question enlarges upon the possible ethical consequences of such a decision: it would bring both this act of hospitality and the foreigner as such into question.

S'il parlait déjà notre langue, avec tout ce que cela implique, si nous partageons déjà tout ce qui se partage avec une langue, l'étranger serait-il encore un étranger et pourrait-on parler à son sujet d'asile ou d'hospitalité? (p. 21)

¹⁰² Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, trans. by Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

In this encounter, language marks both familiarity and foreignness. This second question highlights its importance for the extension of hospitality: if a host is only willing to receive those who speak his or her own language, such a stance brings into question how far the guest would be foreign to the host, and thus, to what extent this act is one of hospitality.

To illustrate the complexity of the connections between language and hospitality, Derrida introduces Plato's account of Socrates at trial. Socrates asks to be treated as a foreigner, so that the court might excuse 'l'accent et le dialecte de son enfance' (p. 23). Derrida's excursus on the same page indicates that his discussion of language expectations as a measure of hospitality is linked with his perspectives on translation, even if this connection is not made explicit.

Ce à quoi nous devons être ici attentifs, pour la commenter et l'expliciter longuement, c'est la différence socio-culturelle des langages, des codes, des connotations à l'intérieur de la même langue nationale, les langues dans la langue, les effets d'«étrangèreté» dans la domesticité, l'étranger dans le même. On peut parler beaucoup de langues dans une langue: d'où les clivages, les tensions, les conflits virtuels ou obliques, déclarés ou différés, etc. (p. 23)

This quotation indexes some of the arguments advanced in his *Monolinguisme de l'autre*, principally highlighting the plurality of differences that comprise what is often thought of as any one language:

Une langue n'existe pas. Présentement. Ni la langue. Ni l'idiome ni le dialecte. (p. 123)

Both of these quotations highlight the lack of homogeneity within any linguistic entity: even one person's language is highly subject to change and develop.

Derrida admits that 'pour le linguiste classique, chaque langue est un système dont l'unité se reconstitue toujours' (p. 123), but emphasises that the unity of a language remains a fiction.

The principal focus of *Le Monolinguisme de l'autre* is how the language user experiences this linguistic plurality, even within a language.

Je n'ai qu'une langue, or ce n'est pas la mienne. (p. 15)

Derrida suggests that language users generally prefer one language, depending on context and register, but that their language is never wholly theirs, for the reasons stated in the above quotations: a language is not a stable entity. 'Une langue' (p. 123) is a fiction, as he states in *Le Monolinguisme de l'autre*; the fictional texts considered in this thesis show relative inattention to the possibilities of linguistic differentiation through accents and dialects. Every character's speech is written in a similar way within texts, even when sometimes, as noted in Chapter Four in the *Roman de Perceforest*, the writer presents these linguistic differences but does not mark them. What Derrida terms 'la même langue nationale' (p. 23) in his *De l'Hospitalité* was not conceptualised as such until after the medieval period, and thus texts from this era seem an ideal case study, as they represent a view of language that is to some extent distinct from the one that prevails at present.

If languages are not stable entities, as Derrida suggests, the user's resultant inability to command his or her language fully means that when placed in the position of host, he or she remains on a continuum of foreignness. *Le Monolinguisme de l'autre* opens up provocative responses to Derrida's questions in *De l'Hospitalité*: exactly what 'tout' refers to, in his statement of 'tout ce qui se partage avec une langue' (p. 21) is far from obvious. 'Se partager' marks language's ambiguous position, as it indicates both sharing and dividing. Even the

apparently familiar may contain the unknown; this idea draws on Julia Kristeva's detailed discussion in her *Étrangers à nous-mêmes*.¹⁰³

Étrangement, l'étranger nous habite: il est la face cachée de notre identité,
l'espace qui ruine notre demeure, le temps où s'abîment l'entente et la sympathie.

The *étranger* is a hidden part of our own identity, and this may be a linguistic phenomenon: for example, a translation has some qualities in common with the *étranger*. The translator writes in one language, but their text has already been conceived in another, a phenomenon Kristeva discusses in relation to the experience of contemporary asylum seekers. This idea is central to my analysis of the *Roman de Perceforest* in Chapter Four and equally features in my examination of the *Roman de Troie* in Chapter One. In his *Monolinguisme de l'autre*, Derrida conceptualises the impossibility of gaining full command of a language as a state of *traduction absolue*. Every user – foreigner, host or neither – must translate from a fictional language, a '*première langue*, qui serait plutôt une *avant-première langue*' (p. 118). This fictional, perfect language in which there is no slippage between signifier and signified is both a desire and a memory of something that may in fact never have existed.

The constant imperative to translate offers a rationale for the question from which Derrida proposes all acts of hospitality begin. He situates this question within a legal context.

Cet étranger donc, est quelqu'un à qui, pour le recevoir, on commence par demander son nom; on lui enjoint de décliner et de garantir son identité, comme à un témoin devant un tribunal. C'est quelqu'un à qui on pose une question et adresse une demande, la demande minimale étant, 'Comment t'appelles-tu?' ou encore, 'En me disant comment tu t'appelles, en répondant à cette demande, tu

¹⁰³ Julia Kristeva, *Étrangers à nous-mêmes* (Paris: Fayard, 1988), p. 9. Further references given in parentheses within the text by page number.

réponds de toi, tu es responsable devant la loi et devant tes hôtes, tu es un sujet de droit. (p. 31)

The name functions as a guarantee of identity, which distinguishes that person from all others. This form is arbitrary, but agreed by convention: in his essay *Des Tours de Babel*, Derrida discusses proper names in relation to translation. The process of changing names may appear one of continuity of meaning, akin to translation, but in fact the process is better characterised as one of rupture, as is clear in the history of Troy's name, offered by the prose *Roman de Troie*, analysed in Chapter Two, and that of Perceforest's own name, given in the opening book of the *Roman de Perceforest*, discussed in Chapter Four. He suggests that names are untranslatable:

Or un nom propre en tant que tel reste toujours intraduisible, fait à partir duquel on peut considérer qu'il n'appartient pas rigoureusement, au même titre que les autres mots, à la langue, au système de la langue, qu'elle soit traduite ou traduisante.¹⁰⁴

The most basic question, 'Comment t'appelles-tu?', permits the act of hospitality by asking for an untranslatable response, which locates the respondent both within and outside language: within, through the noun ending, sound or stress patterns; outside, because the proper noun cannot be translated at all for meaning, as common nouns can. Paradoxically, this question suggests how important translation can be to the act of hospitality. It must begin from a partly untranslatable word, in order to locate the participants, who may have travelled a long way. The second question in the episode from the *Roman de Troie* discussed in Chapter One, 'ou aloënt e dont veneient' [where they were going and where

¹⁰⁴ 'Des Tours de Babel', p. 208. See Eve Tavor Bannet, 'The Scene of Translation: After Jakobson, Benjamin, de Man, and Derrida', *New Literary History*, 24 (1993), 577-95 (pp. 585-8) for a discussion of Derrida's 'Tours de Babel' in relation to Benjamin's 'Task of the Translator'.

they came from] (l. 1202) equally could demand proper nouns as responses. This nexus of locations enables the two parties to locate each other, and measure how far each has travelled. It further allows them to converse, perhaps in translation, even if the latter process remains implicit in retellings of acts of hospitality. In his *Monolinguisme de l'autre*, Derrida observes that ideas of the home, or the place where hospitality is offered, are created in language, like the birthplace:

la naissance quant au *sol*, [...] la naissance quant au *sang* et, ce qui veut dire tout autre chose, la naissance quant à la *langue*. (p. 31)

The birthplace in language is therefore equally open to translation. The identities of host and guest may be renegotiated and rethought.

Hospitality can involve processes of translation; the meeting of two cultures within this encounter certainly evokes the linguistic possibility of translation. The dynamics of both hospitality and translation may be fraught, as one party or language seeks to dominate the other, but can also produce generosity (these possibilities are played out in the *Roman de Troie*, as suggested in Chapter One). Hospitality begins with the arrival of the foreigner, whose presence may reveal the host's own foreignness. The first questions of hospitality require proper nouns as responses because they are both inside and outside of language, and translation.

Acts of hospitality may well give rise to translation because they are exchanges which are essential to travel of more than a day's length. They begin with a question that requires an untranslatable answer, in order for the exchange to progress and be renegotiated. Hospitality evokes the act of translation, whether cultural or linguistic. Both hospitality and translation might give rise to a state of hybridity, when two cultures intersect to produce something new. However, this

newness is always relative, and translation is a symbol of this perspective: Derrida conceives of all language acts as translation, because we cannot ever fully own a language. Whether translation is produced for readers who cannot understand the source text, for multilingual readers who prefer a language to another, or for multilingual readers who enjoy reading in more than one language, in distinct ways, all three possibilities highlight the impossibility of fully owning one language. This brief analysis of the network of concepts connected with translation demonstrates that it cannot be considered in isolation from its broader intellectual context. This thesis, the rationale and structure of which I shall shortly outline in detail, deliberately plays on the slippages between these concepts.

This thesis – and why it matters

I would first like to introduce an example from *Floire et Blancheflor* (c. 1160), which opens up the questions that inform this thesis. This narrative is not about the Trojan war but it depicts a cup which dates implicitly back to Troy. This narrative was transmitted all over Europe and North Africa, and it begins by describing its own transmission through translation:¹⁰⁵

L'aisnee d'une amor parloit
A sa seror, que molt amoit,
Qui fu ja entre .II. enfans,
Bien avoit passé .II. cens ans,
Mais uns boins clers li avoit dit,
Qui l'avoit leü en escrit. (ll. 49-54)

[The older one was telling her sister, who was very much in love, of a love that took place once between two children, well over two hundred years ago, but a good clerk had told her the tale, who had read it written down.]

¹⁰⁵ *Floire et Blancheflor*, ed. by Jean-Luc Leclanche (Paris: Champion, 1980). Further references given in parentheses within the text by line number. For an account of this text's transmission in the Iberian peninsula and Italy, see Patricia E. Grieve, *Floire et Blancheflor and the European Romance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

The reader already gets this narrative at three removes, as the narrator recounts the older sister's words; she has heard it from a clerk, who has read it written down. The source for this French text is thus 'en escrit', but its language is unspecified. Given that the story takes place two hundred years before, the fictional book would have to be either very old and have been passed down to him, in which case, it is almost certainly not in French, or the latest avatar of a series of copied texts of Floire and Blancheflor's love affair.

This tale is not usually associated with Troy, but the Trojan material underpins the story and indeed acts as a model for it. Blancheflor is exchanged for a cup that depicts the events of the war and its build-up, a detail perhaps drawn from the contemporary *Roman d'Eneas*.¹⁰⁶ The Greeks destroy Troy (ll. 453-6), Paris goes to kidnap Helen (ll. 457-8), and Agamemnon goes to get her back (ll. 461-4). 'Enz el covercle de desus' [On the lid on top] (l. 465) is depicted the judgement of Paris (ll. 466-90) and his decision to go and capture Helen. Sharon Kinoshita proposes that the events are told in 'inverse chronological order'; I suggest that the destruction of Troy could be the initial destruction recounted in the *Roman de Troie*, and so these first three events are in chronological order, with the cause of Paris's lust for Helen painted on the lid: thus the major battle for Troy, which is due to take place after Agamemnon assembles his ships, is not

¹⁰⁶ Yves Lefevre, 'Autres romans du XII^e siècle: *Floire et Blancheflor*', in *Grundriss der Romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters: Le Roman jusqu'à la fin du XIII^e siècle*, ed. by Hans Robert Jauss, Jean Frappier, Reinhold Grimm and Erich Köhler, 2 vols (Heidelberg: Winter, 1978), I, pp. 265-9 (pp. 265-6) notes the close relations between *Floire et Blancheflor* and the *romans antiques*.

represented.¹⁰⁷ The cup does not show its own transmission through geographical, and by implication, linguistic, translation, but we are told:

Li rois Eneas l'emporta
De Troies quant il s'en ala
Si le dona en Lombardie
A Lavine, qui fu s'amie. (ll. 503-6)
[The king Eneas took it from Troy when he left there, and gave it to Lavine, who was his lover, in Lombardy.]

Eneas and Lavine indeed speak different languages, because one is Trojan and the other is from Lombardy, as the *Roman d'Eneas* notes when Eneas reads Lavine's letter 'tot an latin' [all in Latin].¹⁰⁸ Could there be an echo of that mutual understanding when Floire and Blancheflor learn Latin together, and no-one else can understand them? The 'signor' [leaders] of Rome 'dusqu'a Cesar' [up until Caesar] (ll. 508-9) own the cup, which is stolen from him by

uns leres qui la l'aporta
u li marchant l'acaterent
Et por Blancheflor le donerent. (ll. 510-12)
[a thief, who took it to the place where the merchants bought it, and gave it for Blancheflor.]

The cup is traded – both legitimately and illegitimately – in translation. To give one example of the hands through which it passes, as the bourgeois merchant who sells Blancheflor in exchange for the cup, 'sot parler de mains langages' [could speak many languages] (l. 426).

The cup's origins can be traced back to Troy because of the narrative it depicts: it shows its origins in ekphrasis. Its own history of *translatio* mirrors that of the Trojans, at least until Rome. It therefore enacts a geographical translation from Troy to Rome to wherever Blancheflor is, which parallels many narrative

¹⁰⁷ Kinoshita, p. 88.

¹⁰⁸ *Eneas: Roman du XII^e siècle*, ed. by J.-J. Salverda de Grave, 2 vols (Paris: Champion, 1973-83), I. 8777.

accounts of *translatio imperii*.¹⁰⁹ Floire then takes the cup and exchanges it for a promise of fealty which enables him to force the guard to allow him access to Blancheflor. In this way, the cup is given, stolen and traded. These transactions all take place within, and equally create, a contact zone. The trajectory of the cup is that of *translatio imperii et studii*, but the linguistic element remains central: first, it is an imperfect representation of a story translated from one language into another within its fictional transmission, and secondly, the cup is represented – and created itself – through words. The translation retroactively creates its source, and thus the events that it depicts. This cup both retells and makes this story anew, which is of particular interest in relation to Jacques Lacan’s discussion of *création ex nihilo*, which centres on a similar-shaped object, the pot.¹¹⁰ Throughout this thesis, my definition of fiction is indebted to Lacan’s argument. Lacan alleges that the pot is the first artefact: when the pot is made, it enables humans to ‘façonne[r] un signifiant’ (p. 144). What is special about the pot’s ability to signify

est bien dans sa forme incarnée ce qui caractérise le vase comme tel. C’est bien le vide qu’il crée, introduisant par là la perspective même de le remplir. (p. 145)

By making the pot, we can therefore conceive of nothing: the empty space formed by the pot.

Le vide et le plein sont par le vase introduits dans un monde qui, de lui-même, ne connaît rien de tel. (p. 145)

The pot produces this space, which enables us to imagine emptiness and fullness.

C’est à partir de ce signifiant façonné qu’est le vase, que le vide et le plein entrent comme tels dans le monde, ni plus ni moins, et avec le même sens. C’est ici l’occasion de toucher du doigt ce qu’a de fallacieux l’opposition du prétendu concret et du prétendu figuré – si le vase peut être plein, c’est que d’abord, dans

¹⁰⁹ See Kinoshita, p. 89 for an account of the cup’s parallels with Blancheflor.

¹¹⁰ Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire Livre VII: L’Éthique de la Psychanalyse* (Paris: Seuil, 1960; repr. 1986), pp. 139-52. Further references are given in parentheses within the text by page number.

son essence, il est vide. Et c'est très exactement dans le même sens que la parole et le discours peuvent être pleins ou vides. (p. 145)

Writing is a made artefact that makes things representable. 'Rien n'est fait à partir de rien', notes Lacan (p. 146), punning on 'rien' as the Latin *res*, or thing. The artefact must be made in order to conceive of nothingness (for example, in my argument, an imagined origin). The pot produces the concept of the space inside it. In the same way, writing produces its own origin, which can only be represented retroactively. The verse creates the fiction of the cup, which equally acts as a figure for that creation: we make an artefact – the pot – which in turn allows us to conceive of the void. The Latin root of fiction, *fingere*, to mould, form or feign, is relevant here: we can now fill the pot with fictions, having created the idea of the void. The cup creates events that we can never recapture, a fiction, and indeed, may not represent key elements of the story. Trojan stories thus offer the perfect example for conceiving of creativity, precisely because these distant events are so often retold in tales that lack important episodes and details. Medieval writers often saw this vision of creation in terms of translation, as in the retroactive translation of the cup in *Floire et Blancheflor* through ekphrasis: the translation creates its source. This example thus offers one possible approach to the principal research questions of this thesis: to what extent is translation considered integral to creation and textual production in medieval French texts? Why does the conceit of translation from a lost source seem to shape narratives even when this source is a fiction?

In order to answer these questions, this thesis brings writers together who are often thought of as disparate, coming from different places, periods and some of whom write in different languages: for example, John Gower is rarely studied

alongside other French-language writers, despite a third of his output being in French.¹¹¹ In order to facilitate consultation, I have appended a table to this thesis that details the texts studied in each chapter, their date of composition, how many manuscripts of each text are extant, and their provenance.

However, the texts share the same subject matter, the Trojan War and its legacy, and the way in which they respond to the topos of fictional translation means that they deserve consideration together. Apart from the writers discussed in Chapter Three, each writer accounts for their own textual production by claiming to have translated a text, either physically, linguistically, or both. Geoffrey of Monmouth, Benoît de Sainte-Maure, the prose *Troie* writers, the *Histoire Ancienne* writer, Guido delle Colonne and the *Perceforest* writer all claim to have translated old texts which have been newly recovered; for Benoît and the prose *Troie* writers, this text is a Latin copy of an eyewitness account of the Trojan War. In Chapter Three, I discuss how Christine de Pizan and John Gower respond to this tradition of conceiving textual production in distinct ways.

The response to these questions develops in four chapters, which examine texts from 1150-1450, which are written for the Plantagenets, in Italy, in England and at the courts of Paris and Hainaut, in order to establish how these ideas develop – and to what extent they remain constant – as they travel and age. First, metaphors for translation resonate throughout Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie*, in particular, the comparison of translation with a tree, which draws on concepts of family genealogy. One character, Medea, symbolises both

¹¹¹ A notable exception is Jane Gilbert, 'Men Behaving Badly: Linguistic Purity and Sexual Perversity in Derrida's *Monolinguisme de l'autre* and John Gower's *Traitié pour essamplir les amantz marietz*', *Romance Studies*, 24 (2006), 77-89.

reproduction and translation. By investigating her depiction, from her part in the hospitality her father shows to Jason and the Argonauts, to Benoît's occlusion of her eventual fate when she kills her children, she is one example of how women function within the *Roman de Troie* to connect translation with reproduction, as gift-givers, as gifts, and finally through endings that indeed might thwart their very ability to reproduce. My analysis engages with Derrida's *Le Monolinguisme de l'autre* and *De l'Hospitalité* as well as the work of Gayle Rubin.

The investigation of anti-reproductive endings in Chapter One leads to Chapter Two's discussion of how the association between translation and reproduction develops within the later prose *Troie* tradition. The *Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César*, which was written in the early thirteenth century and which circulated for three centuries, envisages written composition through the metaphor of adding a layer to a sculpture. In the *première mise en prose du Roman de Troie* (second half of the thirteenth century) and Guido delle Colonne's *Historia Destructionis Troiae* (finished in 1287), translation is implicitly figured as artificial reproduction through the act of idol-making. This Christianised reading of pagan beliefs indicates how translation sharpens the focus on Troy's relations to its legacy in Western Europe in these texts. Following on from David Abulafia's historical work, I examine how these works place the city within larger historical and geographical settings, and thus present linguistic evidence of previous imperial conquests that long outlasts the movements of power outlined by a *translatio imperii* narrative. The chapter concludes by examining a short continuation, the *Roman de Landomata* (second half of the thirteenth century), that occurs with the *première* and *cinquième mises en prose du Roman de Troie* as

well as once with the verse *Roman de Troie*. It tells the story of a Trojan descendant's return to Troy, and I suggest, enacts a reverse *translatio imperii*.

The texts studied in the second half of this thesis – in Chapter Three, Christine de Pizan's *Cité des Dames* (1404-5), John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (1386-90), his *Mirour de l'Omme* (1376-79) and his *Vox Clamantis* (after 1381), and in Chapter Four, the *Roman de Perceforest* (extant manuscripts from the 1450s) – are not normally described as translations, but their writers were engaged with translations, whether as readers, adaptors or partial translators themselves. Christine de Pizan and the *Perceforest* writer both adapt, or claim to adapt, French translations of Latin texts; in a response to Geoffrey of Monmouth, the latter further states he also translates an old book, which has already been put into a Latin translation. The work of the trilingual John Gower, which I examine in Chapter Three, particularly blurs the boundaries between translation and multilingual production: Gower frequently puts passages from one of his own texts in one language into another, as well as quoting and translating from other texts.¹¹²

Unlike the writers of the previous two chapters, neither of the writers studied in Chapter Three gives a detailed account of the Trojan War, nor claims to have translated their texts. Drawing on Lacan's pot from Seminar Seven, I suggest that they present a distinctive concept of fiction that is not directly imagined as a form of translation, but which nonetheless is structured in a similar way through the concept of the example. Both John Gower and Christine de Pizan envisage

¹¹² Copeland, *Rhetoric*, pp. 204-20, esp. p. 206 proposes that the principal structural device of the *Confessio Amantis* is *compilatio* enabled by *divisio*: *compilatio* covers all these possibilities.

their textual production in relation to Trojan material. They also both introduce the figure of Carmentis, the inventor of the Latin alphabet and – for Christine – the prophet of the Trojans’ arrival at Rome, as a symbol of physical and linguistic translation. My study draws on all three of Gower’s major works, his *Mirour de l’Omme*, *Vox Clamantis* and the *Confessio Amantis*, and Christine de Pizan’s *Epistre Othea* and her *Cité des Dames*.

The final chapter asks how translation persists as a means of conceptualizing textual production in the *Roman de Perceforest*, which was perhaps initially composed between 1330 and 1350, but survives in a *remaniement* from the 1450s: this narrative is driven by the encounter with unfamiliar languages, peoples, times and lands. The text’s fictional transmission history is based on the foreign within the domestic, a theme – theorised by Freud and Kristeva – vital to the setting and plot of *Perceforest*, in which Greek invaders discover a Britain populated by Trojans. The extent to which language determines recognition sheds light on this writer’s concepts of fiction and heritage, and thus how, within this text, language invents memory – and earlier language acts – retroactively.

This thesis examines the importance of the trope of translation as a means for writers to conceive of their creative process throughout the Middle Ages, and how these metaphors for textual production have a shaping influence on their narratives. It thus sheds light on writers’ own fictional conceptions of translation as well as the importance of that process for understanding creativity throughout this period. The consequences of this study for understanding narratives are great: translation sits at the heart of encounters between cultures, and leads characters –

and readers – to question what they had thought was familiar, and what was not.

Within these texts, translation always has surprising consequences: this thesis might offer some food for thought today, in a world in which foreignness, linguistic difference and migration continue to elicit the strongest emotional responses.

1. Translation, Reproduction and Women in the *Roman de Troie*

Benoît de Sainte-Maure opens his *Roman de Troie* by paraphrasing Wisdom 6:

22:

Salemon nos enseigne e dit,
E sil list om en son escrit,
Que nus ne deit son sen celer. (ll. 1-3)
[Solomon teaches and tells us, and thus it may be read in his writings, that no-one
should hide their wisdom.]

In order to write these lines, Benoît most likely read Solomon's 'escrit' in the Latin Vulgate version, itself a translation from Greek patterned on Hebrew verse. This scene of writing and reading has therefore been translated at least twice, but the stages of transmission are not equally apparent. These lines collapse the geographical and temporal distance between the pre-second century Book of Wisdom, in its Latin version, and Benoît's twelfth-century French, written for the Plantagenet court. Benoît warns against hiding wisdom, but he does not mention the languages in which he is reading and writing at this point.

However, this example parallels Benoît's account of the *Roman de Troie*'s fictional textual transmission; he would like to

[...] travailler
En une estoire comencier
Que de latin, ou jo la truis,
Se j'ai le sen e se jo puis,
La voudrai si en romanz metre (ll. 33-7)
[work to begin on a story, so that from Latin, where I 'found' it, if I have the
wisdom and if I can, I will want to put it into French.]

'Trais' is ambiguous, signifying both the acts of discovery and composition, as outlined in the Introduction: Benoît suggests that his French is creating this story

afresh.¹ Within the course of the *Roman de Troie*, Benoît states he drew on two Latin sources. He notes that the Latin version of ‘Daire’, or Dares Phrygius’s *De Excidio Troiae*, was translated ultimately from the ‘greque langue’ [Greek language] (l. 92), even though Dares was a Trojan, and also implies that ‘Ditis’, or Dictys Cretensis, who ‘fu defors en l’ost Grezeis’ [was outside [the walls] in the Greek army] (l. 24401) ‘les uevres [...] mist en escrit come il mieuz pot’ [put the deeds into writing as best he could] (l. 24404).² Both go unremarked at this point, since Benoît obscures the translated nature of his Latin source. The parallel transmission histories for the biblical quotation that spurs him into writing and for Benoît’s own text – an account which becomes increasingly complex – raise two questions about translation in the *Roman de Troie*: how important is it to Benoît’s presentation of his writing process? And to what extent does translation shape his narrative? In these passages, Benoît reflects on the importance of sharing knowledge through the creation of new texts, like the one we are about to read.

This chapter develops in five parts, the first of which opens with a close examination of this prologue, which permits a discussion of translation’s importance for the first episode of the narrative proper. I suggest that the protagonist of this episode, Medea, might be read both as a symbol of translation, and as a means of interpreting the wider text. She is important within her father’s display of hospitality to Jason and the Argonauts, in ways which are all linked

¹ *TL*, X (1976), col. 697, ll. 2-9; col. 694, ll. 42-52 and col. 695, ll. 1-32.

² Dares Phrygius, *De excidio Troiae historia*, ed. by Ferdinand Meister (Leipzig: Teubner, 1873); Dictys Cretensis, *Ephemeris Belli Troiani*, ed. by Werner Eisenhut (Leipzig: Teubner, 1958). On the circulation and manuscript witnesses of *De excidio Troiae*, which survives in 136 complete manuscripts, see Louis Faivre d’Arcier, *Histoire et géographie d’un mythe: la circulation des manuscrits du ‘De excidio Troiae’ de Darès le Phrygien (VIII^e-XV^e siècles)* (Paris: École des Chartes, 2006), pp. 335-68 and pp. 33-118.

with physical translation. In exchange for a promise of marriage, she presents Jason with the esoteric knowledge that enables him to win the Golden Fleece. Medea is associated with foreignness through her clothing, and significantly, through her bed, where she and Jason consummate their love, and where she tells him what to do to win the Fleece. This exchange of knowledge is the culmination of the successful display of hospitality at Colchis, which contrasts strongly with the Trojans' rejection of Jason's request to stay overnight, which Benoît presents as the ultimate cause of the Trojan war. The second section of this chapter suggests that this display of hospitality, in which Medea plays a central part, evokes translation; she finally presents herself as a gift to Jason in order to travel to his home. In the third section, I consider Medea's specific functions as a gift alongside Benoît's later presentation of another woman particularly associated with translation, Briseida. Like Medea, Briseida is associated with material goods that have been traded from far away, and I suggest that her pelt, which she wears as she is exchanged by the Trojans for a Greek warrior, may be read as a symbol for translation. She enters her father Calchas's tent, which was traded from Egypt, and is decorated with a world map and bestiaries; I suggest it functions as an image of totalising, monolingual knowledge. The fourth part of this chapter shifts the focus away from physical translation to examine Medea and Briseida's textual legacies. Briseida is particularly aware of how she will be represented in writing, and wishes she could forget about her own deeds; Medea does not offer a similar reflection, because Benoît thwarts the ending of her tale by alluding to her eventual fate of killing her own offspring but refusing to describe what happens. I suggest that the endings of these women's stories might be read as representations

of Benoît's concerns about the reproduction of stories, and the reception of his own work. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the Trojan horse in the light of the previous discussion, proposing that it is a mistaken gift, a rejoinder to the Trojans' failure of hospitality, and thus a symbol of failed translation within the text.

Translation and Reproduction

Wisdom 6:22-4 enables Benoît to develop a model of translation in his Prologue.

Si ergo delectamini sedibus et stemmatibus reges populi diligite sapientiam ut in perpetuum regnetis. Quid est autem sapientia et quemadmodum facta sit referam et non abscondam a vobis sacramenta Dei sed ab initio nativitatis investigabo et ponam in lucem scientiam illius et non praeteribo veritatem.³

[If your delight be then in thrones and sceptres, O ye kings of the people, honour wisdom, that ye may reign for evermore. As for wisdom, what she is and how she came up, I will tell you, and will not hide mysteries from you: but will seek her out from the beginning of her nativity, and bring the knowledge of her into light, and will not pass over the truth.]

First, he makes the promise not to hide the mysteries of God the centrepiece of his own gloss, so that his emphasis shifts from loving wisdom to loving to share it with others.

Nus ne deit son sen celer,
Ainz le deit om si demonstrer (ll. 3-4)
[No-one must hide his wisdom, rather, one must show it]

For Benoît, those who impart knowledge – teachers – also have a claim on collective memory:

Remembré seront a toz tens
E coneü par lor granz sens,
Quar sciënce que est teüe
Est tost obliëe et perdue. (ll. 17-20)

³ Wisdom 6:22-4 in *Biblia Sacra: Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, ed. by Robert Weber, 2 vols (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1969), II, p. 1009; all Bible translations from *The Bible: Authorized King James Version with Apocrypha*, ed. by Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[They will be commemorated forever, and renowned for their great wisdom, for knowledge which is kept quiet is soon lost and forgotten.]

By implication, the line of translators, within which Benoît places himself, should also be remembered. This exhortation to share wisdom functions as an exordium for the Troy story.⁴

Benoît then departs from the biblical text to introduce the consequences of not sharing knowledge, as well as his own image of translation. He remarks thus on the adverse consequences of not sharing knowledge:

Qui set e n'enseigne o ne dit
Ne puet muër ne s'entrolit (ll. 21-2)
[Whoever knows something and doesn't teach or tell it, can't develop nor does he forget himself.]

In an image drawn from falconry, that person cannot 'muër' or change, perhaps implicitly, grow up: he or she cannot shed their feathers. The *FEW* notes the reflexive meanings of 'entr'oblir' (under *oblitare*) as 's'oublier un peu, devenir négligent'. The possibility of becoming hazy or half-forgetting something suggests that teaching and sharing knowledge is part of a process of development, which entails forgetting older states of mind or subjectivities.⁵ The principal benefit of sharing knowledge is therefore renewal and development. It is not necessarily a cumulative process, but rather it ensures changing subjectivity. The following two lines confirm this fear of stasis:

E sciënce qu'est bien oïe
Germe e florist e frutefie. (ll. 23-4)
[And knowledge that is well heard shoots, flowers and bears fruit.]

'Oïe' and 'dit' perhaps evoke conversation or lecturing, but in the light of Benoît's subsequent genealogy of translators, these markers of oral transmission

⁴ Zink, 'Mutation', p. 9 notes that this moral is common to the *romans antiques*.

⁵ *FEW*, VII (1955), p. 273.

could represent all communication. Knowledge that is successfully shared grows like a tree, which renews its leaves yearly.

This image of natural transmission, or broadcasting, shapes Benoît's presentation of the genealogy of his text. It was passed down from a Trojan soldier's eyewitness diary 'en grezeis' [in Greek] (l. 104), which suggests the Trojan language functions as an *avant-première langue*, a perfect, imaginary language, within this text. The manuscript lay lost in a cupboard for many years, with many grammar books (l. 88) until Sallust's nephew, Cornelius, decided to translate it into Latin. Benoît promises to follow its 'matire' [content] (l. 144), but he equally vows to add 'aucun bon dit [...] se faire le sai' [any good saying [...] if I can do so] (ll. 142-3).⁶ Zrinka Stahuljak compares this passage with other occurrences of this lost book topos.⁷ Benoît's own text remembers – and hugely rewrites – a text that had been forgotten. As he looks to the future of his own text, Benoît is keen for it to be well received: in lines 129-37, he places emphasis on its finished state as well as the novelty of his endeavour in French.

Translation marks this particular process of transmission with the translator at its heart. Emmanuèle Baumgartner notes that one of the principal aims of twelfth-century writers is to be 'mis [...] en mémoire du passé'; the figure

⁶ See Douglas Kelly, 'Mirages et miroirs de sources dans le *Roman de Troie*', in *Le Roman Antique au moyen âge: Actes du Colloque du Centre d'Études médiévales et dialectales de Picardie, Amiens, 14-15 janvier 1989*, ed. by Danielle Buschinger (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1992), pp. 101-10 for a discussion of Benoît's attitudes to his sources and David Rollo, 'Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie*: Historiography, Forgery, and Fiction', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 32 (1995), 191-225 (pp. 202-9) for analysis of the lost book's trajectory.

⁷ Zrinka Stahuljak, *Bloodless Genealogies of the French Middle Ages: Translatio, Kinship, and Metaphor* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2005), pp. 160-1.

of the translator is thus important here.⁸ Benoît anticipates future translations of his own work with his future perfect promise that ‘en maint sen avra l’om retrait’ [it will have been translated/told in many ways] (l. 42). Zrinka Stahuljak identifies two potential trajectories outlined by Benoît through his metaphor for translation: ‘parallel to the reading of completion, we find another reading: that of dispersion’.⁹

Modern commentary on translation highlights some of the implications of Benoît’s metaphor, which Stahuljak indexes. In his *Tours de Babel*, Jacques Derrida suggests that the original ‘se donne en se modifiant’: it only comes into being when it is being remade or altered.¹⁰ The translation, or copy, is a necessary prerequisite to the concept of the original, whether the latter is fictional or not. In his *Le Monolinguisme de l’autre*, Derrida places this process in time:

Il s’érige même comme désir de reconstituer, de restaurer, mais en vérité d’inventer une *première langue* qui serait plutôt une *avant-première langue* destinée à traduire cette mémoire. (p. 118)

The translation does not only alter the original, but rather desires and creates it as a prosthesis. If Dares and Dictys had not existed, they would have had to have been invented.

The productive capacities of translation are further emphasised by Judith Butler in her ‘Betrayal’s Felicity’:

We have translation facilitating a new purity, one that is associated with a complex action, and with no final end, no eventual stasis.¹¹

⁸ Emmanuèle Baumgartner, ‘Benoît de Sainte-Maure et l’œuvre de Troie’, in *The Medieval Opus: Imitation, Rewriting and Transmission in the French Tradition*, ed. by Douglas Kelly (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), pp. 15-28 (p. 26).

⁹ *Bloodless Genealogies*, p. 160.

¹⁰ ‘Des Tours de Babel’, p. 217.

¹¹ Judith Butler, ‘Betrayal’s Felicity’, *diacritics*, 34 (2004), 82-7 (p. 85).

Purity, or the lack of foreign intrusion, suggests that translations can usurp the position of the source text. Translations can never achieve such purity, but paradoxically, they always work towards this goal. In his *Monolinguisme de l'autre*, Derrida elaborates upon this apparent paradox: the process of translation produces a 'mirage d'une autre langue', which is 'infiniment désirable' (p. 44). The perfect source and target language is longed for, but ultimately unobtainable. 'Infiniment' suggests translation's capacity to create, which Benoît's metaphor of reproduction anticipates. Scholars of the Middle Ages have characterised medieval translators' perspectives in similar ways: Gabrielle Spiegel notes their 'perfectionist' impulses, whilst Barbara Nolan notes of Benoît that he 'implies that his *roman* will aspire to an encyclopaedic wisdom', which she nonetheless sees 'paralleling that of the typical school handbook'.¹² Such commentary suggests that medieval writers' aesthetics of textual production may be placed alongside these poststructural understandings of translation in order to establish what is at stake for both.

Perhaps most compellingly, Judith Butler's discussion of the logic and implications of the copy points towards the implications of Benoît's metaphor.¹³ Through her investigation of gender identity and drag, she raises the question of how reproductive processes, and by extension, processes of reproduction, are culturally coded. Benoît uses reproduction as a metaphor for a means of cultural production, translation, which, like drag, has an 'imitative structure'.¹⁴ His

¹² Gabrielle Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: the Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 103; Nolan, p. 19.

¹³ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990; repr. 2008).

¹⁴ *Gender Trouble*, p. 187.

rewriting of his source, a translation of a fictional Trojan account itself, might be understood in the light of Butler's comments on gender meanings as 'imitations which effectively displace the meaning of the original, they imitate the myth of originality'.¹⁵ In representing – and creating – his extant source within his work, Benoît both creates the concept of the original and places it within a context of multiple origins: it is not a stable idea. Creativity and production are associated with 'la lecture récréatrice': with the translation.¹⁶ He describes knowledge well disseminated, which 'germe e florist e frutefie' [is sown, and flowers, and bears fruit] (l. 24). This metaphor prefaces his translation and amplification of Dares and Dictys's texts. Less than ten lines later, Benoît goes on to describe his translation project, which may be read as an example of such learning. This image suggests that translation is a natural product that resembles a flower: it does not replicate its source exactly, it lives independently of it and it too will reproduce, creating new fruit, and by extension, new seeds. This translation will be translated, adapted and perhaps even replaced.

This dual process – of inventing a new story by retelling a tale – begins with the opening lines, when Benoît glosses the quotation from Wisdom, a mode characteristic of biblical commentary; Rita Copeland understands the gloss as the 'point of departure for translation as a form of academic discourse' in the Middle Ages.¹⁷ What is more, it works throughout the 30,000 lines of the *Roman de Troie*. This model of translation allows Benoît to assure us that 'mout est l'estoire

¹⁵ *Gender Trouble*, p. 188.

¹⁶ Emmanuèle Baumgartner, "'Écrire disent-ils': À propos de Wace et de Benoît de Sainte-Maure", in *Figures de l'Écrivain au moyen âge: Actes du Colloque du Centre d'Études Médiévales de l'Université de Picardie, Amiens 18-20 mars 1988*, ed. by Danielle Buschinger (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1991), pp. 37-47 (p. 40).

¹⁷ *Rhetoric*, p. 6.

riche e granz' [the story is very rich and great] (l. 40). However, when he finally introduces his version, he says:

Ceste estoire n'est pas usee,
N'en guaires lieus nen est trovee:
Ja retraite ne fust ancore. (ll. 129-31)
[This story is not well worn, nor can it be 'found' hardly anywhere, and it was never yet translated.]

'Trouver' here has the ambivalence of both discovery and composition, as outlined in the Introduction: Benoît suggests that the story is not located in another text, nor can it be composed anywhere else. He elides his act of creation with that of transmission. A second term discussed in the Introduction as suggesting translation occurs in this quotation: 'retraire' means to pull out or draw out, and by extension, Benoît emphasises the novelty of his story by claiming it has never been translated before into French.¹⁸ Benoît therefore suggests he is presenting a new story, even though he has just discounted Homer's version as untruthful, while presenting the version he wants to follow, that of Dares. Translation is a means of preserving stories, without fixing them for good; Benoît both makes a claim for novelty and presents the fictional transmission of his story through Greek and Latin. Translation modifies a text, and thus, the traditions from which it is drawn, as well as the concept of the original. Benoît thus notes his text's capacity to make this story new as well as to shape its own legacy. Such biblical metaphors shape writers' understanding of translation throughout the

¹⁸ On this passage, see Zink, 'Mutation', pp. 15-16; on Benoît's narrative persona, see Penny Eley, 'Author and audience in the *Roman de Troie*', in *Courtly Literature: Culture and Context: Selected Papers from the 5th Triennial Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society, Dalfsen, The Netherlands, 9-16 August 1986*, ed. by Keith Busby and Erik Kooper (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1990), pp. 179-90 (p. 187); most persuasively, Jean-Charles Huchet, *Le Roman médiéval* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1984), pp. 9-10.

medieval period, for example in the *Roman d'Eracle* (ll. 14-16), the *Histoire Ancienne* (ll. 255-7) and *Guillaume de Palerne* (ll. 1-15).

What is most relevant to this discussion is how these images offer a key to interpreting translation throughout the *Roman de Troie*. Translation is particularly significant in the opening sequence: Jason pursues the Golden Fleece around the Mediterranean, and finally obtains it after meeting a learned figure who mediates occult knowledge, Medea. Like the rest of the book, this early episode is to some extent a translation: Benoît writes this 1400-line episode on the basis of forty-eight lines in Dares Phrygius's text, which does not mention Medea.¹⁹ She is introduced from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book 7, and *Heroides*, Letters 6 and 12.²⁰ David Rollo notes that this episode 'serves a paratextual function: it is positioned at a liminary stage, and its implications inevitably influence our reading of all that follows'.²¹ Jason's visit to Colchis depicts an alternative to the Trojans' outright refusal of hospitality to the Greeks. He sails to Troy and is refused hospitality by the Trojans, but continues to Colchis, where he is given a royal welcome, in which Medea plays a part. She tells him how to get the Golden Fleece, equipping him with magic objects. Instead of a Trojan war, Jason successfully fights a dragon and several automatic contraptions that protect the Fleece. The welcoming party is delighted with his prowess, not least Medea, who

¹⁹ Dares Phrygius, *De Excidio Troiae*, ed. by Meister, paras. I-II.

²⁰ On Benoît's use of Ovid: Constans, VI (1912), p. 236; Nolan, pp. 99-102; Rollo, *Glamorous Sorcery: Magic and Literacy in the High Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), pp. 80-1; Joel N. Feimer, 'Jason and Medea in Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie*: Classical Theme and Medieval Context', in *Voices in Translation: The Authority of "Olde Bookes" in Medieval Literature*, ed. by Deborah M. Sinnreich-Levi and Gale Sigal (New York: AMS Press, 1992), pp. 35-51 (pp. 37-9); Paola Maria Filippi, 'La Réception du mythe de Médée au Moyen Âge', in *La Représentation de l'Antiquité au moyen âge: actes du colloque des 26, 27 et 28 mars*, Université de Picardie, Centre des Études Médiévales, ed. by André Crépin and Danielle Büschinger (Vienna: Halosar, 1982), pp. 91-102 (p. 92).

²¹ *Glamorous Sorcery*, pp. 74-5.

is in love with him, and he takes her home as well as all the booty. This episode, and especially, Medea's part in it, thus merit study in the context of the aesthetics of the *Roman de Troie*. This story, set during an earlier generation to the Trojan war, may be read as paradigmatic for later Greek and Trojan women's lives and fears for their fates, literary or otherwise.

Medea's doomed fling with Jason interweaves translation, hospitality and reproduction. Benoît depicts her initially as steeped in esoteric wisdom, which Jason requires in order to get the Fleece.

Trop ert cele de grant saveir:
Mout sot d'engin e de maistrie,
De conjure e de sorcerie;
Es arz ot tant s'entente mise
Que trop par ert sage e aprise.
Astronomie e nigromance
Sot tote par cuer dès enfance. (ll. 1216-22)
[She was endowed with great knowledge: she knew lots about ingenuity and skill, conjuring and sorcery. She had put so much of her understanding into the arts, that she was very wise and learned. She had learned everything about astronomy and necromancy by heart from her childhood.]

Implicitly, Medea knows at least a second language: the texts Benoît would have known to contain 'astronomie e nigromance' would have been in Greek or Arabic, and at any rate, both would be highly foreign to a French-speaking audience. Even if we assume these texts to be in Greek, Benoît still shows that Medea's knowledge is arcane to the other characters, including Jason. She is not just foreign to him because she lives on another island: her skills mark her out as communicating with the dead and the heavens, neither of which anyone else, including Jason, is capable of doing. She then mediates this highly specialised knowledge to Jason in an oral enactment of *translatio studii* (ll. 1609-762), which includes a script to read out (l. 1703, l. 1713). Julia Kristeva notes that

Magie, animisme ou plus prosaïquement, ‘incertitude intellectuelle’ et logique ‘déconcerté’ (selon Jentsch) sont tous propices à l’inquiétante étrangeté. (p. 275)

Medea’s particular capacities for magic make her foreign not just to Jason and the reader because of her location, but because she has skills that disrupt natural orders: she can make the day night and help Jason to win the impossible adventure (l. 1224; ll. 1414-21). This uncanny quality

réside dans un affaiblissement de la valeur des signes en tant que tels et de leur logique propre. (p. 275)

Medea has the capacity to manipulate language in extraordinary ways in order to alter the environment. The performative quality of her words means that they are distinct from everyone else’s, even though they are familiar enough to Jason for him to reproduce them.²²

Therefore, in this episode as well as in the prologue, learning is not always depicted positively. Like the ‘scientose’ [knowledgeable] (l. 1228) Medea, the ‘esciētos’ [Homer] (l. 46) is also a ‘clers merveilllos’ [marvellous clerk] (l. 45) – just like Dares, Benoît’s preferred source – but his ‘desverie’ [madness] (l. 63) means he is condemned for imagining gods and goddesses fighting with humans (ll. 65-8). Using words to subvert the natural order makes Medea not only foreign to Jason, but unsettling. She helps him to fulfil his adventure but her knowledge troubles his previous understanding of the familiar and the foreign.

Her association with rare knowledge is corroborated by Benoît’s depictions of her clothing and her bed. The first connects her with goods imported through worldwide trade networks:

²² See Carolyn Larrington, *King Arthur’s Enchantresses: Morgan and her sisters in Arthurian Tradition* (London and New York: Tauris, 2006), pp. 8-9 for an argument that both Ovid and Benoît’s Medeas are predecessors to enchantress figures like Morgan in the Arthurian tradition.

Si s'atorna plus bel que pot:
 D'une porpre inde a or gotee,
 Richement faite e bien ovree,
 Ot un bliaut forré d'ermes,
 E un mantel de sambelines
 Covert d'un drap outremarin
 Qui ses set peis valeit d'or fin. (ll. 1230-6)
 [She dressed as beautifully as she could: she had a tunic with ermine fur, dyed
 indigo and dotted with gold, richly and beautifully made, and a coat of false
 ermine, covered with an ultramarine cloth, which was worth 600 pieces of pure
 gold.]

Her clothes have been dyed with imported dye-stuffs, an industry which relies on linguistic translation for successful trading. The word *outremarin*, a blue dye which only began to appear in Western European art around 1200, indexes its travel across the sea; *inde* describes both the tunic's colour and the provenance of the dye.²³

Furthermore, Medea's bed has multiple foreign origins. It is the site of the most intimate display of hospitality in Colchis and indeed within the *Roman de Troie*, and it is a composite, assembled from expensive, rare materials from all over the world. It symbolises Medea's sexual desire for Jason, as she invites him there to consummate their relationship. Given Medea's exotic clothing and knowledge, Benoît thus implies that Medea functions as a metonym of foreign scarcity, with the description of her bed. Jason enters a realm of Oriental decadence, 'en un chier lit d'or et d'argent' [in a rich, silver and gold bed] (l. 1551).²⁴ Its four feet

furent tuit ovré a esmal

²³ Philip Ball, *Bright Earth: Art and the Invention of Colour* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 235-237 on ultramarine; Michel Pastoureau, *Bleu: histoire d'une couleur* (Paris: Seuil, 2000), pp. 17-9 on *inde*.

²⁴ See Francesco de Martino, 'Medea nelle miniature: La prima notte', in *El teatro greco-latino y su recepción en la tradición occidental, II*, ed. by José Vicente Bañuls, Francesco de Martino and Carmen Morenilla (Bari: Levante, 2007), pp. 419-80 on the representations of Medea's bed in manuscript illustrations.

A esmeraudes verdeianz
e a rubins clers e luisanz (ll. 1554-6)
[were all enamelled, with green emeralds and clear, shiny rubies]

As for the quilt, ‘onc meillor n’en ot en Thesaile’ [there was never a better one in Thessaly] (l. 1558), and finally, the blanket

fu riche assez,
D’unes bestes fu toz orlez,
Que reluisent come orpimenz (ll. 1563-5)
[was rich enough; it was all hemmed with a pattern of animals, that shone like the colour of sulphuric dye]

and ‘vous fu d’un drap sarragoceis | D’or e de seie trestot freis’ [was lined with a brand-new Zaragozan cloth, of gold and silk] (ll. 1567-8). Medea, ‘que mout fu sage e gente e bele | Bien esteit digne d’itel lit’ [who was very wise, noble and beautiful, was most worthy of such a bed] (ll. 1570-1). Its origins make this bed opulent.²⁵ The ‘drap sarragoceis’ has been imported from Zaragoza in Spain, which is not in the east, but nonetheless would retain exotic connotations for a French reader as well as for Colchis: Zaragoza had been under Muslim rule until 1118, when the Aragonese conquered it, who were not French-speaking either.²⁶ The lapidaries give various origins for emerald and ruby, which make them foreign both to Medea at Colchis (in latter-day Georgia and therefore to the east of Greece) and to a reader of French. The *Lapidaire en vers* gives the provenance of emerald as ‘Syce, ou flun de Paradis’ [Sicily or the river of paradise] (l. 206) and that of ruby as ‘Lybe ou flun de Parevis’ [Libya, or the river of paradise] (l. 304); the *Lapidaire de Modène* suggests emerald comes from ‘Sithe’ et ‘Egypte’

²⁵ See E. Jane Burns, *Courtly Love Undressed: Reading through Clothes in Medieval French Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002) for detailed readings of luxury clothing which portray ‘courtliness and courtly love as cross-cultural phenomena’ (p. 191), esp. pp. 181-210.

²⁶ Joseph F. O’ Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1975), pp. 218-20.

[Citherea and Egypt] (ll. 193-4).²⁷ Multilingual trade makes this hybrid bed possible.²⁸ The detail of this description makes the bed unlike any other, and almost magical. Her bed, clothing and knowledge all require translation from a vast array of sources, whether through movement of goods, trade or through Medea's own reading in translation.

Medea thus represents foreignness to the Greek Jason, who is not associated with such imported, fabulously expensive goods of diverse origin. Rather, Jason wants to see the exotic lands, 'dont a oï nomer les nons' [of which he has heard the names] (l. 870). Medea's goods from all over the Mediterranean, and including ones from the rivers of paradise, explain partly why Jason is attracted to her as he wants to see the world: she symbolises foreignness. Metonymically, she signifies an array of translated materials; through her transmission of *saveir*, she performs *translatio studii*, implicitly translating – and at least mediating – a series of spells for Jason. Perhaps because she does represent aspects of translation, Jason leaves her once she commits the 'grant folie' [great madness] (l. 2030) of offering to accompany him back to his country. In marrying Medea, he conquers a world exotic to him and to the reader, but fails to acknowledge his own foreignness in relation to her. Together, Medea's skills in arts that are poorly understood by others in the narrative, her willingness to enable *translatio studii* of her magical expertise, and her clothing, which comes to Colchis by extensive trade routes, suggest that she is a symbol of translation.

²⁷ 'Lapidaire en vers' and 'Lapidaire de Modène', in *Les Lapidaires français du moyen âge des XII^e, XIII^e et XIV^e siècles*, ed. by Léopold Pannier (Paris: Vieweg, 1882), pp. 238-85 and pp. 81-110; further references are given in parentheses within the text by line number. See Faral, *Recherches*, pp. 351-8 on exotic origins of stones in romances.

²⁸ Nolan, pp. 34-7 analyses the point of view in the bedroom scene.

Hospitality and Translation

Medea forms part of the ideal display of hospitality at Colchis, which contrasts with the Trojans' earlier failure to welcome the Greeks, an episode which catalyses the Greeks' declaration of war.²⁹ Juxtaposing these two episodes raises questions about women's capacity to symbolise translation within the *Roman de Troie*: it indicates how the literary evidence of that text both parallels and calls into question modern theories of gift-giving and hospitality.³⁰ Medea's father initially presents her to Jason and the Argonauts after the last course of a sumptuous meal:

A mangier lor dona assez
E mout les a bien conreez;
Assez i sistrent longement,
Pro i ot claré e piment.
Li reis es chambres enveia,
E si tramist por Medea:
C'est une fille qu'il aveit
Que de mout grant beauté esteit (ll. 1207-14)
[He gave them enough to eat and drink, and filled them up well; they sat there for a long time; there was plenty of claret and spiced wine. The king sent to the chambers and sent for Medea, his daughter, who was very beautiful.]

She forms the final part of the king's show of hospitality, after he has given the visitors accommodation, food and drink. We then learn of Medea's considerable intelligence and her associations with unusual knowledge and dress.

The early plot of the *Roman de Troie* turns on giving and receiving hospitality. One recent commentator, Jacques Derrida, offers a means of understanding the significance of this act in his *De l'Hospitalité*. As noted in the Introduction, he opens his discussion of hospitality, or the act of receiving another

²⁹ Ruth Morse, *The Medieval Medea* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1996), p. 7 notes one of the themes of this episode as obligation towards guests and betrayal.

³⁰ See Campbell, 'Ethics of *Translatio*', in *Rethinking Medieval Translation*, ed. by Campbell and Mills, pp. 117-21 on the ethics of gift-giving and translation.

– often a stranger or a foreigner – into the home, with the ‘question de l’étranger’ (p. 11). This question is the first step towards inviting someone to stay or to eat:

La question de l’étranger est une question *de* l’étranger, une question venue *de* l’étranger, et une question à l’étranger, adressée à l’étranger. Comme si l’étranger était d’abord *celui qui* pose la première question ou *celui à qui* on adresse la première question. (p. 11)

Derrida puns on ‘de’: the stranger both asks and is asked the initial question. The stranger might ask for hospitality either verbally or implicitly, simply by appearing at the other’s home. There is thus ambiguity about who asks the first question; both host and guest might therefore equally ask the other’s name: ‘la demande minimale étant, “Comment t’appelles-tu?”’ (p. 31). This question is central to setting up a display of hospitality, because it enables both host and guest to identify each other through their origins, whether geographical, familial or both. As Derrida suggests in *Des Tours de Babel*, names cannot be fully translated, which means that they provide a way of locating people:

Un nom propre en tant que tel reste toujours intraduisible, fait à partir duquel on peut considérer qu’il n’appartient pas rigoureusement, au même titre que les autres mots, à la langue.³¹

At Colchis, King Oëtes asks the Greeks just this question of their name. The exchange is presented in the past tense to show the success of the encounter: ‘Quant li reis sot qui il esteient’ [When the king knew who they were] (l. 1201). He asks two further questions, which equally demand proper nouns for answers: ‘ou aloënt e dont veneient’ [where they were going and where they came from] (l. 1202). He wants to learn more about the information he receives through their names, and asks about the origins of their journey, and by implication, their home. The king is thus able to locate the Greeks within their nation, family and origins.

³¹ ‘Des Tours de Babel’, p. 208.

His enquiries quickly lead to a firm offer of hospitality two lines later, when he ‘honora les de grant maniere’ [honoured them greatly] (l. 1203).

This series of questions connects translation closely with hospitality, which is essential for travel to extend over more than a day’s journey. Hospitality can entail translation – both linguistic and cultural – between host and guest, even though Benoît repeatedly occludes linguistic translation. In part, language creates ideas of the home, or at least, the place where one can offer hospitality to others. The birthplace is linked with the idea of the home, the current or childhood place of residence. Both are important throughout this episode: Oëtès asks Jason where he is from – a place he has left because his uncle wants him to die on an adventure, so that he might not challenge him for the kingdom (ll. 741-98) – and Medea will leave her home and birthplace to accompany Jason to his place of birth and home, where he is greeted warmly (ll. 2028-33, ll. 2053-60). The birthplace is created in three ways, according to Derrida in his *Monolinguisme de l’autre*:

la naissance quant au *sol*, [...] la naissance quant au *sang* et, ce qui veut dire tout autre chose, la naissance quant à la *langue*. (p. 31)

However, in his *De l’Hospitalité*, Derrida equally observes that ‘la langue dite “maternelle” est déjà “langue de l’autre”’ (p. 83); the fantasy of oneness with the mother is always a fiction created retroactively, articulated through the words that, by definition, no-one possesses at that stage. If language acts are always translations from others’ words, the birthplace in language is therefore also subject to translation. In this story, which narrates the origins of the Trojan war and thus of the beginnings of the European peoples and lands, translation hides and creates linguistic origins.

The identities of host and guest can never be fixed, but always remain open to redefinition in relation to the other through potential translation. For Derrida in his *De l'Hospitalité*, the initial question troubles the identity of both: 'celui qui, posant la première question, me met en question' (p. 11), in an observation that pinpoints the moment of realisation that 'l'étranger nous habite', as Julia Kristeva puts it (p. 9). As soon as the foreigner appears, the host's identity must be created afresh in relation to the foreigner, and vice versa. Jason addresses his Argonauts as 'seignor Grezeis' (l. 1063) as soon as the Trojans refuse to let them stay; their national identities predominate as they define themselves against one another. For Homi Bhabha, writing from a Derridean perspective on postcolonialism, identity is performative, and it is constantly reshaped by encounters with the foreign: the self is recreated 'in the world of travel'.³² He further argues that culture is shaped in this encounter, to which translation is central.

It is the 'inter' – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *inbetween* space that carries the burden of the meaning of culture.³³

Hospitality is one example of an inbetween space, requiring both translation and negotiation, as we see the Argonauts and those at Colchis introducing each other, so that the Argonauts might stay in the country. The Trojans refuse to acknowledge the liminal space created when the Greeks disembark. The failure of hospitality within that encounter 'motivate[s...] the destruction of Old Troy', and

³² Bhabha, p. 9.

³³ Bhabha, p. 38.

provides the root cause for the war which dominates the *Roman de Troie*.³⁴ The Trojans' failure to engage in any cultural translation ensures their destruction. Benoît highlights the complete seriousness of Troy's failure of hospitality by immediately juxtaposing it with the successful display of hospitality at Colchis.

Jason's initial zeal to travel (ll. 867-73) encounters an obstacle when the Trojans refuse him and his Argonauts hospitality. Thus, in the *Roman de Troie*, the initial cause of the Trojan war is not the rape of Heleine (although it is a contributing factor), but the Trojans' failure to offer Jason and the Argonauts somewhere to stay for a couple of nights. Benoît is clear about their lack of acquisitive intentions:

N'aveient mie grant corage
De faire el país lonc estage
Mais mout lor ert e buen e bel
De reposer en lieu novel (ll. 995-8)
[They did not have very much desire at all to stay over in the country for long,
but it was good and sweet for them to rest in a new place.]

They did not do 'mal ne damage' [wrong nor damage] (l. 1001) 'en la contree' [in the country] (l. 1002). Troy is just a stopping-off point with whose novelty the Argonauts are pleased, though their own belligerence is soon revealed once they are slighted. Benoît juxtaposes this assertion of innocence with the Trojan messengers' report to their king, Laomedon, which focuses on the Greeks' potential destruction of Troie if given hospitality (ll. 1010-4). The prediction of Troy's fall is fulfilled for exactly the opposite reason.

Laomedon does not embark on any act of translation, linguistic or otherwise. He refuses to ask their names, the first question of hospitality. He

³⁴ R. M. Lumiansky, 'Structural Unity in Benoît's *Roman de Troie*', *Romania*, 14 (1958), 410-24 (p. 411).

already knows and assumes too much based on the messenger's information. In this way, he refuses to disrupt the Trojan identity, and thus does not realise that the Greeks only want to stay temporarily and have no intention of invading Troy. His refusal to enter into any dialogue makes Jason initially withdraw from talking to Laomedon's proxy, the messenger 'de part le rei' [on the part of the king] (l. 1038). The messenger delivers a letter dictated from the king aloud to Jason (ll. 1027-8). After he has told them to leave, Jason does not bother to respond to him first, perhaps because Laomedon slights him through his absence from his own message. Jason responds by first addressing the Argonauts as his own 'seignor Grezeis' [Greek barons] (l. 1063). The two sides are confirmed immediately in national terms, anticipating their ensuing conflict.

Jason characterises Laomedon's refusal of hospitality as a shame. This fate is exactly what Laomedon fears: that he will be 'honiz e morz' [shamed and dead] (l. 1020). Jason argues that Laomedon, 'qui de sa terre nos congiee' [who sends us away from his land] (l. 1065) has done him 'grant honte' [great shame] (l. 1064). The Trojans' 'grant tort, grant despit e grant honte' [great wrong, great disdain and great shame] (l. 2086), as Benoît later characterises it, is a refusal to open up their home and land to foreigners because they fear this will destroy their culture. The Greeks later vow that Laomedon will be 'honiz e morz' [shamed and dead] (l. 2097) in the ensuing war. The two sides both love honour and are afraid of shame, yet their perspectives on the reasoning behind the Argonauts' request for hospitality diverge. The Trojans' inability to welcome them means they fail to enter into any act of translation, whether linguistic, or through cultural movement and exchange.

In the *Roman de Troie*, refusing to welcome others and to enter into translation to incorporate them into your own language and culture – and to reach out into theirs – is a great error of judgement. Benoît presents two examples showing what could have happened if the Trojans had embraced linguistic and cultural translation. An outraged Jason voices the first:

E s'il en Grece fust venuz
A grant joie fust receüz:
Il n'en fust mie congeez
Anceis i fust mout honorez. (ll. 1081-4)
[And if he had come to Greece, he would have been received with great joy: he wouldn't have been sent away at all, and thus he would have been very honoured.]

The 'grant joie' replaces the 'grant honte' [great shame] (l. 1064) which the Trojans have done the Greeks. Laomedon fears that he will 'perdre s'onor' [lose his honour] (l. 1021) if he invites the Greeks to stay but Jason claims Laomedon would have been 'mout honorez' [very honoured] (l. 1084) if he had come to Greece. Jason instead vows to tell everyone of 'ceste honte qu'il nos a faite' [this shame he has done us] (l. 1086), which could well entail linguistic translation on a large scale as 'mout par en ont tenu grant conte' [they told great stories about it in many places] (l. 2085). The Greeks will shape the Trojans' future reputation as a people who are shamed for failing to participate in a fundamental cultural rite.

The Trojans' punishment for refusing hospitality is long-lasting. Initially strong and then increasingly isolated, they are eventually condemned to a migratory existence, where they have to ask for hospitality wherever they go, as shown at the very end of the *Roman de Troie* and throughout traditions of continuing this story. They become the permanently itinerant subject population of Laomedon's fears. The Greeks vow that 'tote l'en confondront sa terre' [they will destroy all his land] (l. 2095). This verb echoes Genesis 11; the Trojans will

be scattered like the people of Babel, whose language God vows ‘confundamus’ [let us confound] in Genesis 11:7.³⁵ The Trojans are condemned to wander the world without a permanent home, through many different lands, including Carthage, Rome and all over Europe, as the subsequent chapters examine in more detail. The Trojans’ and the Greeks’ fortunes are formidably reversed.

However, Benoît sets up an alternative scenario of hospitality, which implies that the Trojans need not have lost their city. The Argonauts carry on to Colchis, land of the Golden Fleece, and hospitality is offered, accepted and successfully achieved in its city, Jaconitès.

Oètès vait contre eus li reis ;
Si baron e si vavassor
Les reçurent a grant honor. (ll. 1198-200)
[Oètès, the king, goes to them; his barons and vassals received them with great honour.]

Here, the ‘grant honte’ (l. 1064) the Trojans did the Greeks is replaced with ‘grant honor’. The king does not send a messenger; rather, the entire court comes out to meet the incomers and to negotiate terms of hospitality (or, potentially, war) with them. Whereas Laomedon prefers to send a messenger, thus showing Jason and the Argonauts that he does not think them worthy of a royal welcome, Oètès and his barons receive the incomers and ask the questions upon which hospitality hinges with successful results.

In this encounter, translation is central to the act of successful hospitality. Movement of goods or people over land or sea requires hospitality in order to be viable over more than a day’s journey; the request for hospitality thus implicitly

³⁵ Catherine E. Légú, *Multilingualism and Mother Tongue in Medieval French, Occitan, and Catalan Narratives* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), pp. 22-34 analyses the story of Babel in relation to *Girart de Roussillon* persuasively.

evokes acts of translation and calls upon the guest to give his or her name, placing them, as Derrida argues in his *Tours de Babel*, outside the translatable.³⁶ This question forms the start of a relationship between host and guest. In the *Roman de Troie*, one act that often follows the initial offer of hospitality is the exchange of gifts.

Gifts and Translation

In the *Roman de Troie*, gifts are transported long distances and have often been traded and carried from far away already. In one example, when Briseida leaves Troy for the Greek camp in an exchange of prisoners, she wears an Egyptian cloak, which has already been a gift: her father gave her the pelt, which a friend had given him.

However, just as hospitality has unexpected consequences in the *Roman de Troie*, so does gift giving. Marcel Mauss argues that gift giving ‘soude les clans et en même temps les divise, [...] divise leur travail et en même temps les contraint à l’échange’.³⁷ One particular kind of gift occurs repeatedly in the *Roman de Troie*: the exchange of women. Claude Lévi-Strauss suggests that marriage is a most basic form of gift-exchange.³⁸ In her now classic feminist critique of Mauss and Lévi-Strauss, Gayle Rubin notes that ‘women are transacted as slaves, serfs, and prostitutes, but also simply as women’.³⁹ She observes that

³⁶ ‘*Tours de Babel*’, p. 208.

³⁷ Marcel Mauss, ‘Essai sur le don: forme et raison de l’échange dans les sociétés archaïques’, *L’Année Sociologique*, 1 (1923-4), 30-186 (p. 172).

³⁸ Lévi-Strauss quoted in Gayle Rubin, ‘The Traffic in Women: Notes on the “Political Economy” of Sex’, in *Toward An Anthropology of Women*, ed. by Rayna J. Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), pp. 157-210 (p. 173).

³⁹ Rubin, ‘Traffic’, in *Toward An Anthropology*, ed. by Reiter, p. 176.

women do not need to act – except as women – in order to be exchanged, or indeed, to affect their exchange value. Furthermore, she notes that kinship systems

do not merely exchange women. They exchange sexual access, genealogical status, lineage names and ancestors, rights and *people* – men, women and children – in concrete systems of social relationships.⁴⁰

Giving presents at marriage forms ‘une parenté entre les deux couples de parents’, and by implication, primarily, two groups of men.⁴¹

Although women’s importance has often been noted in the *Roman de Troie*, their specific function as gifts has not.⁴² For example, Priam gives Heleine away to Paris, which cements their bond as father and son. But perhaps Heleine also substitutes for Esiona, Paris’s sister, whom Antenor and Paris did not rescue from the Greeks; Priam hopes that they will exchange Esiona for Heleine. Her kidnap seems an exchange to the Trojans, who think the Greeks unfairly kidnapped Esiona, but the Greeks see Hercules taking Esiona back from Troy to his home as a prize of war. Exchanges of women catalyse entire series of episodes, including battles. Bastardised versions of the gift, which one side perceives as fair in this tit-for-tat economy, such as stealing or kidnapping, serve to confirm division.

Translation enables some of the implications of exchanging women to be unravelled within this text. Most obviously, exchanging a woman means she moves from the home of one kinship group to another, thereby establishing a link

⁴⁰ Rubin, ‘Traffic’, in *Toward An Anthropology*, ed. by Reiter, p. 177.

⁴¹ Mauss, p. 62; Rubin, ‘Traffic’, in *Toward An Anthropology*, ed. by Reiter, p. 192 offers a Lacanian analysis for this phenomenon: the phallus is the ‘embodiment of the male status, to which men accede, and in which certain rights inhere – among them, the rights to a woman.’

⁴² See Aimé Petit, *Naissances du roman: les techniques littéraires dans les romans antiques du XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Champion, 1985), pp. 465-6; Nolan discusses them as part of Benoît’s presentation of an Ovidian *fin’amor*, pp. 75-118.

between them. Moreover, Benoît associates some women – at the point of being given – with exotic objects that have been transported.⁴³ Like Medea, these women become overdetermined symbols of translation: at once, they symbolise material that has been transported and the process of translation.

The episode of Jason and Medea offers a convenient example. Oëtès' and the court's display of hospitality functions as an ideal which reverses the Trojans' failure to offer the Greeks accommodation. However, the ensuing exchange of Oëtès's daughter, Medea, ends in such disaster that Benoît refuses to narrate its consequences, and thus paradoxically draws attention to her ending. Nevertheless, this episode still acts as a model of hospitality for the rest of the text, even if the consequences of the subsequent failed exchange echo throughout. Exchanges of women – whether agreed upon or not by giver and recipient – never end happily in this text. Medea's knowledge makes her an attractive but unsettling marriage proposition, doomed once Jason no longer needs her knowledge. In exchange for his hand in marriage, she proposes herself – as a marriageable woman – in addition to her esoteric knowledge. In her study of the *chansons de geste*, Sarah Kay observes that 'as gifts, women are both subjects and objects, included within and excluded from the social world of men'.⁴⁴ This remark certainly describes Medea well; beginning her relationship as such a gift makes her and Jason's relationship fraught. Medea first expresses her own desires:

⁴³ See Kinoshita, p. 89 for an argument that *Floire et Blancheflor*'s Blancheflor forms part of a Mediterranean traffic of people and goods.

⁴⁴ Sarah Kay, *The Chansons de geste in the Age of Romance: Political Fictions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 229.

Mais se de ço seüre fusse
 Que jo t'amor avoir pöüsse,
 Qu'a femme espose me preïsses
 Si que ja mais ne me guerpïsses,
 Quant en ta terre retornasses,
 Qu'en cest païs ne me laissasses,
 E me portasses leial fei,
 Engin prendreie e bon conrei
 Com ceste chose parfereies,
 Que mort ne mahaing n'i prendreies.
 Fors mei ne t'en puet rien aidier
 Ne aveier ne conseilïier. (ll. 1407-18)

[If I were sure of this, that I could have your love; that you would take me as a wife; that when you went back to your land, you wouldn't leave me in this country, and you would be loyally faithful to me, I would gather cunning and good equipment, with which you would achieve this deed, so that you might not die or injure yourself seriously. Apart from me, nothing can help you: neither wealth nor advice.]

In this exchange, Medea positions herself as both giver and gift, because she offers Jason her knowledge and magic equipment in return for his love and a pledge to marry her, in which she would normally become a gift.

However, Medea's suggestion rather makes Jason her gift to herself: Jason is in fact exchanged as a man for Medea's knowledge, which permits him to get the Fleece; he only achieves the adventure because he agrees to be exchanged as a gift. David Rollo compares Benoît's depiction of his authorial role with that of Jason's quest, highlighting the common maritime and occult metaphors.⁴⁵

Although Rollo compellingly posits this episode as structurally important, his reading does not adequately account for Medea, who is instrumental in preparing and equipping Jason. She tells him the spells and gives him the tools to enable him to win the Fleece, and soon transforms him from an author figure, writing his own adventure, into the object of her gaze, as she itemises his physical

⁴⁵ *Glamorous Sorcery*, pp. 77-82.

attractiveness (ll. 1262-76). His response to her proposal is appropriately passive: 'jo qu'en direie?' [What shall I say about it?] (l. 1429).

What is more, Medea wants to travel with him to his home, which may appear usual, except that Jason does not want her to do so. Medea's associations with foreign knowledge and goods make her an assemblage of that world, which Jason had set out to discover and where he would 'faire tel rien | Que l'om li atornast a bien' [do such a deed that would be ascribed to his honour] (ll. 871-2). What he had not anticipated, however, was that the exotic woman, who is very closely linked with the adventure of the Fleece upon which he decides to embark, might want to see him and also return to his home. Jason is happy to show off the Fleece:

Fiere parole en demenerent,
Quant la merveille remirent.
Mout en reçut Jason grant pris
E grant honor, si com jo truis. (ll. 2051-4)
[They spoke proud words about it, when they admired the marvel; Jason received great esteem and great honour, as I find.]

However, he and the Argonauts want Medea to remain isolated as foreign, rather than realising the extent to which they might be foreign to her: they refuse to 'reconnaître [l'étranger] en [eux]', within themselves, as Julia Kristeva puts it (p. 9). Medea's presence reveals how he obtained the Fleece through her own translation and her exchange. Indeed, her strong understanding of the Fleece adventure reveals the importance of transmission and collaboration to Jason's seemingly singular quest. He goes to conquer the world, but he does not want the people he left at home to know that he required help. He survives as a guest abroad but he does not want his identity – or way of life – to be brought into question as a host.

Medea thus presents herself as a gift, but doing so makes Jason the gift: she exchanges her translated knowledge, and therefore, the adventure, in return for marriage with him. He leaves her and, in the *Metamorphoses* (Book 7, ll. 394-7) and Hyginus's Fable 25, she kills her children in revenge when they return to Jason's home. Exchanges of women, often perceived as such only by one side, and as stealing by the other, frequently lead to hostilities escalating. If these women are metaphors for translation, they show its difficulties: texts can resist translation, and never enter into absolute translation: like a gift, texts can never be freed entirely from their contexts or their origins.

In the wider narrative, Benoît's depiction of Medea most influences his conception of Briseida. During one of the Greeks' and Trojans' exchanges of prisoners, this Trojan woman is returned to her father, the Trojan seer Calchas, who is living with the Greeks in self-imposed exile after having received a prophecy of the Greeks' victory. This scene echoes that of Medea's failed exchange. Although Briseida does not share her father's learning, she is strongly associated with translation. She wears a pelt that may be read as a metaphor for translation, like Medea's bed. This gift is made of materials traded from all over the world and embroidered with encyclopaedic knowledge. When she arrives at the Greek camp, she enters a tent decorated with a world map, which was a gift to Calchas. Finally, like Medea, her exchange is not universally agreed upon by all the groups involved: Briseida too takes the initiative to give herself to Diomedes, the Greek soldier who escorts her to her father's tent on the Greek side, when she is already pledged to Troilus.

Although Barbara Nolan suggests that she is a response to Ovid's Helen, Briseida can also be read as Benoît's second response to Ovid's Medea.⁴⁶ Like Medea, when she leaves Troy, she wears not only rich but exotic clothes, that have been given to Calchas, her father, a 'sages poëtes coneüz' [known wise man/poet] (l. 5820). Laura Hodges sees this moment in Benoît as marking 'the fantasy stuff of the romance genre', but in this case, these clothes might be read as emblematic of Benoît's translation.⁴⁷ They associate Briseida with worldwide movement of goods and multilingual exchange, without depicting her as completely foreign; after all, she can remove the clothes. She thus reflects the double nature of translation as drawing on both the foreign and the familiar. This scene marks Briseida's physical translation as she leaves Troy, packing her bags and dressing in 'des plus chiers guarnemenz qu'ele a' [the most expensive clothes she has] (l. 13332). In this way, wearing clothes is presented as a means of transporting them. Barbara Nolan notes that Benoît, 'as academic moralist, frames the event by lambasting women for their changeability'.⁴⁸ The moral condemnation of mutability certainly gave rise to suspicion of translation in this period, to which Briseida is no exception.

Her 'manteaus' [coat] (l. 13352) is then particularly remarkable in this light. Benoît begins to describe its makers thus:

En Inde la superior
 Firent un drap enchanteor
 Par nigromance e par merveille (ll. 13341-3)
 [In greater India, enchanters made a cloth by necromancy and marvel]

⁴⁶ Nolan, pp. 110-11.

⁴⁷ Laura F. Hodges, 'Sartorial Signs in *Troilus and Criseyde*', *Chaucer Review*, 35 (2001), 223-59 (p. 242).

⁴⁸ Nolan, p. 41.

This cloth, therefore, was made far away by those with esoteric, morally dubious powers akin to Medea's: the 'enchanteor' were skilled in 'nigromance' and 'merveille'. Benoît offers more detail on how it came to Briseida, via her father Calchas:

Un sage poëte Indien,
Qui o Calcas le Troïen
O esté longement apris,
Li enveia de son païs. (ll. 13353-6)
[A wise Indian poet, who studied with Calchas the Trojan for a long time, sent it him from his country.]

'O' here suggests that Calchas, described earlier as a 'sage poëte' [wise poet] (l. 5820), taught this Indian wise man; both are described as 'poëte[s]'. Tobler-Lommatzsch suggests that 'poëte' can mean both 'Dichter' or poet and 'Weiser, Seher (vates); Priester', or seer or prophet.⁴⁹ Four out of his eight examples for the meaning of seer or prophet, come from the *Roman de Troie*, so these may be Benoît's puns. Calchas and his friend implicitly conversed enough to send and receive such a gift across continents, and so must have spoken a common language in a multilingual classroom setting. Not only would this gift be foreign to a French reader, it is foreign to Calchas, a Trojan, from whose lineage Western European readers are descended, but who lives in the Greek camp: the gift is familiar but also strange.

The knowledge that these two share is equally foreign to most people, Indian, Trojan, Greek or French: the languages of 'nigromance' and 'merveille' are limited to 'enchanteor' like Medea. As 'poëtes', they are both implicitly closely linked with translation and textual production. In the prologue, Benoît calls for 'sen' [sense] (l. 3) to be shared in order for knowledge to flourish. One

⁴⁹ *TL*, VII (1969), col. 2058, ll. 3-42.

text that participates in such dissemination of knowledge is Benoît's own translation, which he has 'tailliez' [cut], 'curez' [shaped], 'asis' [lined up] and 'posez' [laid] (ll. 135-6). Here, 'sen' leads to a building metaphor again, this time not for a translation but a pelt. Benoît emphasises that this garment is made by human skill: in order to 'bastir' [build] this 'uevre' [work] (l. 13359), 'covenant grant sen e grant avir' [great sense and great wealth are required] (l. 13360). Both physical translation and interlingual dialogue are necessary to make and give the pelt as a gift.

For example, the cloak's materials originate from the East, and some are fictions. It is made from the skin of a 'dindialos' [dindialos] (l. 13367), found 'vers Orient' [towards the East] (l. 13365) where a 'gent sauvage' [wild people] (l. 13372) live. The pelt itself is a marvel 'où éclate l'étrange couleur de l'Orient': it is both foreign to Benoît and a symbol of his own creativity.⁵⁰ He notes:

Ço truevent clerks en escriture
 Que bestes a vers Orient, –
 Cele de treis anz est mout grant –
 L'om les clame dindialos. (ll. 13364-7)
 [Clerks find written down that there is an animal, towards the East – at three it is
 very large – people call them *dindialos*.]

The origins for this pelt are fully mysterious. Benoît cannot attest to the existence of this animal at first hand. He assures us that 'clerc' have read about this beast but does not state whether he has done so. The source of this 'escriture' is unmentioned; Edmond Faral thinks Benoît may have invented the name.⁵¹ The 'dindialos' is thus thoroughly textual: this exotic creature is wholly created within Benoît's French translation. He gives us an encyclopedia-style digression on this

⁵⁰ *Recherches*, p. 366.

⁵¹ *Recherches*, p. 367, n. 1.

creature, and how it is hunted by the *cenocephali*, who occur in Augustine's *City of God*, Book XVI, 8, for example.⁵² Aimé Petit notes this as an example of Benoît's 'goût pour l'insolite, auquel s'associe une démarche de caractère didactique et même encyclopédique'.⁵³ The skin is exotic; it would be impossible without translation. Benoît probably read about the *cynocephali* in Latin; although their name is from Greek, he does not explore the literal Greek meaning of dog-headed people. He thus summons this Greek proper noun, which sounds both technical and foreign in the French, in support of his own mythical and equally Greek-sounding creation to a non-Greek reader, the *dindialos*. Given that none of his readers would have known Greek, the *dindialos* is convincing, especially when placed alongside mythical creatures that do belong to established traditions in translation. It is possible that some readers would not have recognised the *dindialos* joke but would have noted the *cynocephali* from Augustine's *City of God*, and thus seen that this creature springs to life through a process of fictional translation. It takes place on a skin, the surface on which manuscript writing occurs.

Indeed, in this passage, Benoît further invites questioning of his own sources, when he describes the provenance of the hem of Briseida's garment:

D'unes bestes de grant pris:
Dedenz le flun de Paradis
Sont e conversent, ço set l'om,
Se ço est veir que nos lison. (ll. 13397-400)
[It comes from a highly prized animal: they live in the river of Paradise and they talk, as we know, if what we read is true.]

⁵² Faral, *Recherches*, p. 319 notes that their existence is widespread in contemporary texts, such as the *Lettre du Prêtre Jean*.

⁵³ Petit, p. 548.

For Aristotle, speech separates humans from animals, and so Benoît is deliberately provocative, as he confirms the existence of these talking animals, before asking whether we can believe everything we read.⁵⁴ Given that this animal's fur forms the hem of this mythical garment, a reader might well question the plausibility of the *dindialos*. Translation and creation are interwoven.

Moreover, the coat is embroidered with the aim of translation as outlined by Benoît in both his prologue, and in his description of the east (ll. 23135-202): encyclopaedic knowledge. This multisensory (ll. 13392-4), extremely well-dyed and multicoloured (ll. 13341-7) cloak is embellished with vast understanding of the world:

Si n'a soz ciel bestes ne flors
Dont l'om n'i veie portraitures,
Formes, semblances e figures. (ll. 13348-50)
[There is not an animal or a flower on earth, whose depiction, form, likeness or figure one cannot see there.]

The coat is decorated with complete, universal sets of natural knowledge that suggest that a totality of knowledge is indeed attainable. This universal, perfect learning is something that translation always gestures towards, but will never attain. This gift is thus monolingual in its totalising ambitions; it has an ideal of universal knowledge reproduced upon it. Briseida's coat charges her move from Troy to the Greek camp, to be with her Trojan father in self-imposed exile at the Greeks' hospitality, with overtones of translation. This coat was given between male friends who probably spoke different languages but who also studied together, and so it enables Briseida to enact translation between the Trojans and the Greeks.

⁵⁴ Aristotle, *The Politics*, trans. by H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932), I. I: 10.

With the coat, such a successful gift previously, she thus presents herself
as a gift. Diomedes escorts Briseida

[...] al paveillon
Qui fu al riche Pharaon,
Cel qui neia en la mer Roge.
Danz Calcas l'ot d'un suen serorge,
Por aprendre li la mesure
Com bien li monz est lez ne dure,
Ne com bien la terre est parfonde,
Ne qui sostient la mer ne l'onde:
Ço li aprist e fist saveir,
Assez l'en dona grant avoir,
Quant il le paveillon en ot.
Onques ancor clers tant ne sot
Que la façon ne la merveille,
Ne ço que li tres apareille,
Poüst escrire en parchemin
Ne en romanz ne en latin. (ll. 13819-34)
[to the tent which belonged to the rich Pharaoh, the one who was born in the Red Sea. Calchas had it from a brother-in-law of his, to teach him how wide or how long the world is, and how deep it is, and who holds the sea and the wave up; he gave him a very great amount of wealth when he had the tent. No clerk ever knew enough yet to write on parchment, either in the vernacular or in Latin, the way it was made or the marvel of it, or what was inside the tent.]

On entering the Greek camp, Briseida enters the ideal of translation –
encyclopaedic, universal knowledge that is impossible to write down. The tent
represents a 'phrase promise' of *traduction absolue*, that translation can only
labour towards, as Benoît shows the clerks doing.⁵⁵ This tent could only be
described fully at an impossible, future moment.

Briseida functions as a gift in this scene: like Medea, she gives herself
away to Diomedès, having already

de sei fait don
E de son cors e de s'amor:
Ço saveient tuit li plusor. (ll. 13268-70)
[Given herself, her body and her love, as most people knew.]

⁵⁵ *Monolinguisme*, p. 118.

She has already pledged herself to Troilus as a public gift. However, once they are separated physically, it does not take long for her to forget this exchange and enter into a new one with Diomedes. This gift is seen as betrayal:

Ja est tochiee de la veine
Dont les autres font les forfaiz
Qui sovent sont diz e retraiz (ll. 15180-2)
[[Troilus] is touched to the quick, to whom others do wrongs, which are often told and translated.]

Translation and betrayal are closely linked in the rhyme of ‘forfaiz’/‘retraiz’, which Briseida also uses in her lament for her reputation. Giving a gift that has already been given away is presented as a betrayal. Thus Briseida’s move from Troy to the Greek camp becomes emblematic of translation’s potential for betrayal.

She equally enters into a translation in this miraculous tent that has been made, given (and paid for) for the purposes of learning. This Middle Eastern tent is older than Troy. Briseida, associated with the process of translation as she moves from that city to the Greek camp, enters into a symbol of untranslatability, while she knows she is destined for a perpetual legacy in literary translation, as I shall discuss shortly. In doing so, she betrays her Trojan lover for a Greek one. Her gift of herself to Diomedes links translation with both betrayal and also with potential reproduction: if she were not young and sexually reproductive, perhaps this episode could end differently. Briseida focuses relentlessly on the future: she is translated material, but through her, Benoît comments on the unending process of translation and reproduction. There can never be a comprehensive *traduction absolue*; it is an ideal that guarantees the continuation of translation.

Anti-Reproductive Endings

Briseida thinks explicitly in terms of her own literary heritage: she is invented by Benoît and inserted into a story which highlights its own status as translation.

Briseida knows that her story will not end with her death, and reflects on her own memory, as it will be passed down to future women:

De mei n'iert ja bon escrit
Ne ja chantee bone chançon. (ll. 20238-9)
[There will never be a good story about me, or a good song sung.]

Ma tricherie et mis mesfaiz
Lor sera mais toz jorz retraiz. (ll. 20262-3)
[My cheating and my wrongdoing will ever more be translated/told to them.]

She imagines herself memorialised in song and writing, and through *retraire* – as noted in the Introduction – in a process of translation.

Mout voudreie avoir cel talent
Que n'eüsse remembrement
Des uevres faites d'en ariere. (ll. 20321-3)
[I would really like to have the capacity not to remember the things I did in the past.]

She does not much mind about her reputation, if only she could stop thinking privately about it. Alfred Adler sees her lament as marking the 'loss of [her] self-respect'.⁵⁶ Indeed, she does appear to feel private guilt, but perhaps this feeling is only occasioned by the shame she thinks she has brought upon other women.

Through Briseida's remarks, Benoît offers an oblique commentary on his attempts to memorialise or 'mettre en memoire' (e.g. l. 103). She focuses relentlessly on the future since she goes on to promise to concentrate on loving Diomedes (ll. 20329-40). She wants to forget her own past, thwarting potential reproduction first in her own memory, contrary to the principal desire within the text to erect memorials

⁵⁶ Alfred Adler, 'Militia and Amor in the Roman de Troie', *Romanische Forschungen*, 72 (1960), 14-29 (p. 20).

for everyone.⁵⁷ Briseida wants to live now, without a past: sexualised through her unproductive infidelity, she knows she will be written about negatively. Rather than wishing herself unborn, however, Briseida wishes to forget what has happened.

Her depiction is anticipated by that of Medea: both have their reproductive possibilities and their legacies in translation blighted. Medea's prematurely arrested narrative as an abandoned woman gives early substance to the other women's fears in this text. Benoît refuses to note her later deeds – which include killing her children and herself – attributed to her by other writers. Her unreleased, unknown ending arrests the episode: it can only produce a Troy story in microcosm. Its unfinished consequences leak out through the rest of Benoît's 'grant uevre' [great work] (l. 2044). As both Lumiansky and Feimer note, we do not learn of the story most famously associated with Medea, in which she kills the children she has had by Jason.⁵⁸

Quar, si com li Autors reconté,
Puis la laissa, si fist grant honte.
El l'aveit guardé de morir:
Ja puis ne la deüst guerpier.
Trop l'engeigna, ço peise mei;
Laidement li menti sa fei.
Trestuit li deu s'en corrocierent,
Qui mout asprement l'en vengierent. (ll. 2035-42)
[For, as the author tells it, he then left her in a shameful way. She had saved him from death: he should never have left her. He tricked her too much, which grieves me; he betrayed his oath meanly. All the gods were angry, who wrought very bitter vengeance on him for it.]

Thus Benoît gives us the briefest details of Jason's betrayal and resultant divine wrath before refusing to tell us any more.

⁵⁷ On this, see Sarah Kay, *Courtly Contradictions: The Emergence of the Literary Object in the Twelfth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 232-41.

⁵⁸ Lumiansky, p. 414; Feimer, p. 45.

N'en dirai plus, ne nel vueil faire,
Quar mout ai grant uevre a retraire. (ll. 2043-4)
[I won't say any more, nor do I want to do so, for I have a great work to
translate.]

Initially the narrator refuses to tell Medea's story at more length to expedite his plot: he wants to embark on 'la plus haute uevre' (l. 2069), abandoning Medea. He refuses to tell Medea's ending, where she kills her children. Cutting life short is a revealing untold ending for this truncated translation. Her fictional life too has been cut short.

However, Benoît includes Jason's homecoming, which mirrors the end of the *Roman de Troie* narrative, when all the Greeks try to return home on a global scale. But he also stops there, offering his fidelity to his translation as a pretext:

De sa vie ne de son fait
Ne sera plus par mei retrait:
Jo ne le truis pas en cest livre,
Ne Daires plus n'en voust escrire,
Ne Beneeiz pas ne l'alonge (ll. 2061-5)
[I won't translate either his life or deeds any longer. I don't find them in this
book; neither does Dares want to write any more about them, nor does Benoît
want to extend the book.]

Benoît shows how far translation shapes his own conceptualisation of his writing; thus 'trouver' (l. 2063) is ambiguous. As already noted, *trouver* means to find or discover, and this can refer to both the act of 'ausgesagt, geschrieben finden', finding knowledge through reading, and 'dichten (auch musik. komponieren)', or the creative act of composition, its more frequently attested usage.⁵⁹ 'Trouver' could therefore be self-referential, if 'jo ne le truis' means Benoît does not want to write of Jason's life in his book. This possibility is plausible, given that Dares does not mention Medea. 'Jo', 'Daires' and 'Beneeiz' are paralleled. In referring

⁵⁹ *TL*, X (1976), col. 694, ll. 42-52 and col. 695, ll. 1-32; col. 697, ll. 2-9.

to his own text alongside Dares's, Benoît conflates his target text, the one he has just written, with a source text, the one he has just read: his text becomes both original and copy.

Yet the most striking aspect of this episode is that Benoît stops the story of the very character who symbolises translation. He preserves the brilliant first impression Medea makes, thus leaving her influence to pervade the text. This suppressed narrative creates a desire for this unfinished plot, and arguably keeps Medea in the reader's mind throughout the tale that Benoît then tells. If Medea symbolises fecundity and translation within the text, her hidden ending, where she thwarts her own biological reproductions, suggests that in fact this symbol of translation does not reproduce any further. Her story works against the prologue's assertions: she forecloses translation when Benoît does 'son sen celer' [hide his learning] (l. 3); this ending calls attention to Medea's other doings by seeming to pass over them. Benoît alludes to the story that contradicts the image of the fecund, exotic Medea only cryptically, but at least some members of the *Roman de Troie* audience would have known it.⁶⁰ Marilynn Desmond notes the wide dissemination of Ovid's *Heroides* from the twelfth century onwards, and Richard Rouse states that 'the A text of Seneca's tragedies, which first emerged in Northern Europe in the twelfth or thirteenth century, was heavily copied and survives in almost 300 manuscripts', but notes equally that 'we have very little evidence concerning the existence of the tragedies in Northern Europe between

⁶⁰ On medieval knowledge of stories about Medea: Filippi, 'Réception', in *La Répresentation de l'Antiquité au moyen âge*, ed. by Crépin and Buschinger, pp. 92-96 emphasises the medieval reception of Ovid; Morse, p. 53 notes commentaries on Seneca as a potential source for medieval knowledge about Medea; Faral, 'Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie*', p. 102 persuasively highlights Benoît's French models.

the tenth and the twelfth centuries'.⁶¹ It is at least possible, then, together with the tradition of commentaries on Seneca (although the first one extant dates from the fourteenth century) that some members of the audience would have known Medea's fate, whether from Ovid or Seneca, and thus, Benoît's omission.⁶²

His own anxiety about textual reproduction, shown clearly in his refusal to tell Medea's story, is traceable in the prologue. He hints at another potential way for textual reproduction to go wrong: it can veer into 'desverie' [insanity] and 'merveilleuse folie' [marvellous madness] (l. 6465). In his account, the Athenians condemn Homer's text not for being a work of history – as it is written a hundred years after the war – but for being too fantastical. However, Homer's book is still 'receüz | et en autorité tenuz' [received and held in authority] (ll. 73-4). Benoît thus highlights the difficulties of selecting an original from which to translate. He suggests that Dares is more reliable, but that Homer has still been held as an authority. It is easy to follow the wrong story, he suggests, whether on grounds of realism or dating. Like Briseida, Benoît also fears for his future reputation: he draws attention to the possibility that authorities can mislead, and is keen that his own text should be well received. He emphasises its novelty and its finished state (ll. 129-37).

⁶¹ Richard Rouse, 'The A text of Seneca's Tragedies in the Thirteenth Century', *Revue d'Histoire des Textes*, 1 (1971), 93-121 (p. 93, p. 94); Marilyn Desmond, 'Gender and Desire in Ovid's Amatory Works', in *Ovid in the Middle Ages*, ed. by James G. Clark, Frank T. Coulson and Kathryn L. McKinley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 108-22 (p. 108).

⁶² See, for example, Nicola Trevet, *Commento alla Medea di Seneca*, ed. by Luciana Roberti (Bari: Edipuglia, 2004).

Conclusion: The Trojan Horse

Translation is thus central to understanding Benoît's concept of textual production, the root cause of the *Roman de Troie*, and how the war is prolonged. Appropriately, perhaps the most famous episode in the story of Troy is that of the Trojan horse, as it is now known, although this name has been transferred to that of the recipients, since it is made by the Greeks; no ancient or medieval writer ever refers to it as such. This episode combines physical translation, hospitality and the politics of an exchange, which one side sees as a gift. The Greeks decide to build the horse because they have just stolen the Palladion, the emblem which ensures Troy will never fall as long as it remains within the city (ll. 25410-15), and the Trojans are unaware of this theft. Calchas and Crisés, another seer, advise the Greeks to present 'une chose [...] grant, en semblance de cheval' [a great thing, in the likeness of a horse] (ll. 25728-9) in order to appease the gods. The Greeks build the horse to appease the gods and also to break down the walls of the city when the Trojans take it in. The Trojans fatally agree with their bishop that:

Minerve vueut et quiert cest don:
O joie e o procession
Le recevez, qu'ensi li plaist. (ll. 25879-81)
[Minerva wants and looks for this gift: receive it with joy and pomp, as it may please her.]

Priam is thoroughly outnumbered in his reluctance to receive the giant horse within the walls of Troy but the court, who have agreed to give Greeks free passage within the walls of Troy (ll. 25837-8) want to receive it.

The Trojans thus see the horse as a gift to the gods that will bring peace to the city.

Cuident de veir certainement
Que par lor diz e par lor faiz
Seit la cité de Troie en paiz. (ll. 25890-2)

[They think truly and certainly, that by their words and deeds, Troy will be at peace.]

The episode that marks the city's downfall turns on a gift that is first, really, an exchange to appease the gods for stealing the Palladion, and second, one that the Trojans must ruin their own walls to receive. It is too large to fit into Troy otherwise. The Trojans' admittance of the Greeks into their city, receiving gifts from them and giving the Greeks free passage, is their ironic downfall, since they did not do this for the Argonauts, a much smaller threat. When the Trojans do finally try to reverse their failure to provide hospitality in the hope of peace by accepting the Greeks' gift, this gift turns out to be an aggressive battle tactic, engineered through Antenor's betrayal. In urging the Greeks to build it, Calchas and Crisés marshal the narrative thus far: previous failures of hospitality, reluctance to translate, and gift exchange all bear upon the Greeks' entrance to Troy. The Trojan horse is the most enduring image of this story.

This narrative enjoys great success throughout the medieval period, and is put into prose, translated and adapted. The next chapter examines how the writers of the prose versions of the *Roman de Troie* conceive of translation, when they adapt the *Roman de Troie* (and in one case, Dares Phrygius's *De Excidio Troiae*). These writers offer their own metaphors for their textual production, including the making of idols. These images are often linked with a concern to plot the legacies of the Trojan War in relation to contemporary places and trade networks. In doing so, these prose writers rethink *translatio imperii et studii* as a series of networks, which explicitly locate Troy within its wider surroundings.

2. Translation and Secondary Creation: the Prose Troy Tradition

The Old French verse *Roman de Troie* (c. 1165) is one of the most widely disseminated vernacular texts composed in the twelfth century. However, its impact is even broader because it was translated, directly and indirectly, adapted into French and Latin prose and incorporated into other texts, such as the *Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César*.¹ It enjoyed wide popularity inside and outside France, in particular, in Italy. Like some of its adaptations, the *Roman de Troie* begins with a fictional account of its own production and transmission. It claims to be a translation of an account first written in Greek by a Trojan soldier, and subsequently put into Latin by Dares Phrygius. This story of *translatio imperii et studii* thus presents itself as a translation, and forms the source text for numerous transpositions and translations.

The writer of the *Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César* also presents his text as a translation in the verse prologue. The *Histoire Ancienne* is a prose work, but in two manuscripts, the prose is accompanied by a prologue and moralising passages in verse. Paul Meyer proposes that these represent the 'état primitif' of the text, because they offer precise information on patronage and composition; they are the

¹ *Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César (Eistoires Rogier): édition partielle des manuscrits Paris Bibl. Nat. f. fr. 20125 et Vienne Nat. Bibl. 2576*, ed. by Marijke de Visser-van Terwisga, 2 vols (Orléans: Paradigme, 1995-99); verse quotations included as an appendix to volume 2. Further references to this edition are given in parentheses within the text by volume, paragraph and line number). The *Histoire Ancienne* Troy section is quoted from Marc-René Jung, *La légende de Troie en France au moyen âge: analyse des versions françaises et bibliographie raisonnée des manuscrits* (Basel: Francke, 1996), pp. 358-430. Further references to this edition are given in parentheses within the text by paragraph and line number, and labelled 'Jung'.

ones Marijke de Visser-van Terwisga accordingly chooses to edit.²

S'il veut, en romans dou latin
Li cuic si traire lonc la letre
Que plus ne mains n'i sera metre (II, Prologue, ll. 266-8)
[If he [the patron, Rogier de Lisle] wishes, I will aim to translate the writing word
for word into French from Latin for him, in such a way that he will not able to
add or remove anything from it.]

Then, in a verse passage towards the end of this text, by repeating 'ausi'

anaphorically, he builds a comparison between decorating the face of an image
and retelling stories.

Mais on doit bien son dit nuer
De raison, s'il est qui le face.
Ausi com on nue la face
D'une ymage, quant on la paint,
Ausi est droit que cil se paint
Qui recontre bone matere:
Qu'il n'i oblit Deu Nostre Pere
Quar li exemple de tot bien
Vient de lui. (I, para. 145, ll. 13-21)³
[But a writer should enhance his tale well, if he is the one who is producing it,
with reason. Just as one enhances the face of an image, when one paints it, thus it
is right that he who retells good material paints himself: that he does not forget
the Lord our Father in doing so, for the examples of all goodness come from
him.]

The quotation from the prologue refers to translation from Latin, a process that
has at least partly created this text.⁴ The author initially conceives of his whole
text in this way, and claims he translates it line by line. Here, he implicitly draws
a parallel between painting upon a pre-existing surface and writing a translation,
which suggests a model of translation distinct from that of reproduction proposed
in the *Roman de Troie*. Bringing these two disparate passages from the same text

² Paris, BnF, MS f. fr. 20125 and Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 2576; Meyer, p. 52.

³ Unlike the other verse quotations, these lines are contained in the body of de Visser-van Terwisga's text, I (1995), p. 87. I have altered the punctuation of line fourteen from a full stop after *raison* to a comma, which makes more sense and avoids enjambement.

⁴ See *Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César*, II (1999), pp. 232-40 for a short discussion of its Latin sources.

together raises two questions about the way he understands his task as a writer and translator: to what extent does he conceive of his textual production as a form of translation? And how does he present that act within the text?

This chapter is about the prose adaptations of the *Roman de Troie*, and it is structured in four sections. Because this tradition is complex and relatively little known, I first outline the texts studied in this chapter and their relations. The second part of this chapter examines the analogy with painting a sculpture from the *Histoire Ancienne* more closely, and explores its possible implications as an intermedial metaphor for production. This metaphor of image-making opens up discussion on an important addition to the verse *Roman de Troie* which occurs in both the prose *Troie*, and at greater length in Guido's *Historia Destructionis Troiae*.⁵ This passage describes the creation and multiplication of pagan idols; I suggest these passages might provide suggestive figures for the act of translation as a form of cultural production with ethical consequences, because both statues and translations are supplementary to the notion of an absent original. The third section thus examines how these narratives present origins – including those that begin at Troy – that are progressively centred and decentred, both temporally and geographically, through the movement of *translatio*. I suggest that these prose accounts of the Troy story question that narrative by shaping translation networks

⁵ I discuss the prose *Troie* as presented in *Le Roman de Troie en prose, Tome I*, ed. by Léopold Constans and Paul Meyer (Paris: SATF, 1922), a partial edition of the *première mise en prose*, based on BnF, MS f. fr. 1612, with emendations from BnF, MS f. fr. 1627, also a witness of the first *mise en prose*. These manuscripts are also online at www.gallica.fr. Guido delle Colonne, *Historia Destructionis Troiae*, ed. by Nathaniel Edward Griffin (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1936); Guido delle Colonne, *Historia Destructionis Troiae*, trans. by Mary Elizabeth Meek (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1974); further references to these editions are given in parentheses within the text by page number and book and line number respectively.

that work within and even against that frame; these texts are both concerned with locating Troy temporally in relation to the continuation of *translatio studii* to the present day and equally in relation to the Trojans' westward legacy. In the final section, I examine a three-page continuation that accompanies the prose *Roman de Troie* in some manuscripts, the *Roman de Landomata*. Like the prose versions of the *Roman de Troie*, it too is concerned to locate Troy within the wider world, but it provides a clear exception to the general trend of imagining the Trojans' movement westward, because it focuses on Hector's son's conquest of the Orient. In this text, Troy gains renewed strength after its fall, as Landomata, Hector's son, punishes its betrayers. Landomata makes a second wave of *translatio imperii* that reverses the first. Whereas in the *Roman de Troie*, textiles from a distant and even elusive Orient offer important metaphors of translation, in the prose tradition, descriptions of statues and idols introduce images from the plastic arts for the process and consequences of translation. The *Roman de Troie*'s model of translation as a form of natural reproduction is removed and the exchanges of female characters within the narrative are less detailed in the prose versions; rather, the writers examined in this chapter offer perspectives on translation that situate the Trojan war within much longer-term historical contexts as well as wider, geographically precise networks of migration, trade and movement of ideas. Troy is not only defined in relation to those besieging the city, but equally with reference to its trade networks, to the wider Mediterranean, and even to Asia.

The Texts

Although the verse *Roman de Troie* is still being copied in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it also engenders a large tradition of rewriting and retranslation in prose, principally in Italy.⁶ Prose versions of the *Roman de Troie* circulate for a long time, and begin to be copied more frequently than Benoît's verse text.⁷ The Troy section in the *Histoire Ancienne*, the versions of the prose *Roman de Troie* and Guido delle Colonne's *Historia Destructionis Troiae* all claim to be translated or adapted from Dares Phrygius's fifth-century *De Excidio Troiae*. However, apart from the Troy section in the *Histoire Ancienne*, all these texts follow either Benoît de Sainte Maure's French verse text or a prose version of it. The following table details the date of composition, circulation and provenance of these prose texts. The table comprises: the verse *Roman de Troie*, for comparative purposes; the prose adaptations of the *Roman de Troie*, which has been classified into five versions; Guido delle Colonne's *Historia Destructionis Troiae*; and the *Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César*, which Brian Woledge classifies into three principal redactions.⁸

⁶ On this tradition, see Alison Cornish, *Vernacular Translation in Dante's Italy: Illiterate Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 94-6.

⁷ Jung, p. 440 notes of the prose *Troie*, 'la plupart des manuscrits sont en effet du XV^e siècle, ou tout au plus de l'extrême fin du XIV^e siècle (pour Prose 5). Ils datent donc d'une époque où on a cessé, en France comme en Italie, de copier le *Roman de Troie* de Benoît de Sainte-Maure'.

⁸ Brian Woledge, *Bibliographie des romans et nouvelles en prose française antérieurs à 1500: Supplément 1954-1973* (Geneva: Droz, 1975), paras. 77-9.

Text	Date	Number of mss extant	Provenance ⁹
<i>Roman de Troie</i>	c. 1165	30 containing complete texts; 28 manuscripts containing fragments ¹⁰	From Northern France and Central and Northern Italy: 1 from Champagne; 1 from Paris; 1 from Arras; 1 from Provins; 1 from Lorraine; 1 from Picardie; 1 from Lorraine/Burgundy; 2 from central Italy; 1 copied by a Lucas Boni di Florentia; 4 from Northern Italy, including 2 possibly from Padua; 1 from the Veneto. ¹¹
<i>Première mise en prose du Roman de Troie</i>	Mid-late thirteenth century	19 ¹²	The 2 manuscripts for which Jung gives provenance both come from Italy. ¹³
<i>Deuxième mise en prose</i>	End of the thirteenth century	3 ¹⁴	Jung locates these manuscripts to Padua, Genoa and Verona. ¹⁵
<i>Troisième mise en prose</i>	Fourteenth century	1 complete ms; 6 fragments. ¹⁶	French; Italian, perhaps Genoese. ¹⁷

⁹ Information on provenance does not always tally with manuscripts extant – especially for the *Historia Destructionis Troiae* and the *Roman de Troie* – because not all manuscripts have been localised.

¹⁰ Jung, pp. 22-3.

¹¹ Jung, pp. 78-330.

¹² Jung, pp. 442-3.

¹³ Jung, pp. 442-3.

¹⁴ Jung, p. 485.

¹⁵ Jung, p. 485.

¹⁶ Jung, p. 499.

¹⁷ Jung, p. 499.

<i>Quatrième mise en prose</i> ¹⁸	Last quarter of fourteenth century	1	‘L’unique mise en prose qui ait vu le jour en France’. ¹⁹
<i>Cinquième mise en prose</i>	End of fourteenth century	13 complete mss and 4 which contain the first part of the story, of which 11 replace the Troy section in the <i>Histoire Ancienne II</i> and 3 replace that in the <i>Histoire Ancienne III</i> . ²⁰	9 from France; 1 from Northern France; 2 from Paris; 1 from Naples (London, BL Royal 20 D I), which Avril, supported by Jung, suggests is the oldest, and the source text for at least 4 of the other manuscripts. ²¹

¹⁸ *Le Roman de Troie en prose (Version du Cod. Bodmer 147)*, ed. by Françoise Vieliard (Cologne-Geneva: Fondation Martin Bodmer, 1979).

¹⁹ Jung, p. 503.

²⁰ Jung, pp. 506-7; *Histoire Ancienne jusqu’à César*, II (1999), p. 14; on p. 17, de Visser-van Terwisga notes Tours, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 1850 as a third-redaction manuscript rather than a first-redaction one, as Jung does. I therefore add that to the total here.

²¹ François Avril, ‘Trois manuscrits napolitains des collections de Charles V et de Jean de Berry’, *Bibliothèque de l’École de Chartes*, 127 (1969), 291-328 (pp. 306-7); Jung, p. 506.

<i>Roman de Landomata</i>	End of thirteenth century	20	Occurs with prose 1 and 5 and in 1 MS alongside a verse <i>Roman de Troie</i>
<i>Historia Destructionis Troiae</i>	1272-1287 according to Guido delle Colonne	Over 240; printed from 1475 ²²	The 5 rubrics given by Griffin say Guido is writing in Messina, Sicily; the authorship is normally attributed to a Guido de Columpnis de Messana. ²³ At least 3 manuscripts from Italy and 2 from France. ²⁴ But wide dissemination across Europe, given the translations of the <i>Historia</i> . ²⁵
<i>Histoire Ancienne I</i>	Probably 1209-13	74 ²⁶	16 from Paris; 6 from Northern France; 1 from Paris or Northern France; 4 from France; 1 from Soissons/Compiègne; 1 from Tours; 1 from Loire Valley/Bourges; 6 from Italy; 2 or possibly 3 from Bologna; 1 from Venice; 1 from Mantua; 3 from Acre. ²⁷

²² Jung, p. 565.

²³ *Historia Destructionis Troiae*, p. 3.

²⁴ Nathaniel Griffin, 'Introduction', to *Historia Destructionis Troiae*, pp. xi-xvii (pp. xii-xiii).

²⁵ See *Testi inediti di storia Troiana preceduti da uno studio sulla leggenda Troiana in Italia*, ed. by Egidio Gorra (Turin: Loescher, 1887), pp. 152-264 on translations and development of the legend in Italian prose; *Les histories Troyanes traduites al català en el XIVè segle per en Jacme Conesa*, ed. by Ramón Miquel y Planas (Barcelona: L'Avenç, 1916) for a Catalan translation; *Die rumänische Version der Historia destructionis Troiae des Guido delle Colonne: krit. Ed. u. Kommentar*, ed. by Radu Constantinescu and Klaus-Henning Schroeder (Tübingen: TBL, 1977) for a Romanian translation; James Simpson, 'The Other Book of Troy: Guido delle Colonne's *Historia destructionis Troiae* in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century England', *Speculum*, 73 (1998), 397-423 on the English tradition; for an early Czech printed translation, see *Kronika trojanská*, ed. by Jirí Danhelka (Prague: Československý spisovatel, 1951).

²⁶ *Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César*, II (1999), pp. 12-14.

²⁷ *Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César*, II (1999), pp. 12-14.

<i>Histoire Ancienne II</i>	Fourteenth century	11 ²⁸	7 from France; 1 from Northern France; 2 from Paris; 1 from Naples. ²⁹
<i>Histoire Ancienne III</i>	Fifteenth century	3 ³⁰	2 from France. ³¹

Critics have classified the prose adaptations of the *Roman de Troie* into five versions, which represent a set of diverse *dérimages* of Benoît's text. The *première*, *deuxième* and *troisième mises en prose* are independent Italian *dérimages*.³² The *quatrième mise en prose* is another, separate *dérimage*, preserved in a sole manuscript originating from France.³³ Marc-René Jung suggests that the *cinquième mise en prose* writer, who wrote in the fourteenth century before 1380, knew the verse *Roman de Troie*, the *première mise en prose* and the French translation of Dares contained in the *Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César I*; he may even have known the *troisième mise en prose*.³⁴ I discuss the *première mise en prose*, because it is the earliest and the most frequent witness, as well as being one of the three versions to have been partially edited.

Guido delle Colonne's Latin *Historia Destructionis Troiae* is the most widely disseminated version of the medieval French-language Troy tradition. It survives in over 240 manuscripts and was translated into many European languages, including French, English, Romanian, Italian, Czech, Spanish and

²⁸ *Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César*, II (1999), p. 14.

²⁹ *Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César*, II (1999), p. 14.

³⁰ *Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César*, II (1999), p. 14.

³¹ *Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César*, II (1999), p. 14.

³² On the differences between the *première* et *deuxième mises en prose*, see Kathleen Chesney, 'A Neglected Prose Version of the *Roman de Troie*', *Medium Aevum*, 11 (1942), 46-67 (pp. 49-52).

³³ I use Constans and Faral's partial edition of the *première mise en prose* rather than Vielliard's edition, which is fully edited but from a sole, unusual witness. It offers a close, frequently word for word and often abridged version: see *Le Roman de Troie*, ed. by Vielliard, pp. 20-3 and throughout the edition, in which she provides parallel passages from Benoît's verse text.

³⁴ Jung, p. 509.

Catalan.³⁵ Guido states that he finished it in 1287 (p. 276); it is therefore roughly contemporary with the first two French-language *mises en prose*. It is a Latin translation of one or more of these prose versions; however, Guido claims to translate – and finish off – Dares Phrygius’s *De Excidio Troiae Historia*.³⁶ He states he is adapting Dares Phrygius’s Latin, but critics have long thought otherwise, including Louis Faivre d’Arcier, who examines Guido’s relation to Dares in some detail.³⁷ I would like to suggest that Guido might have used the *première mise en prose*, principally because the passage I shall discuss here in relation to the *Historia Destructionis Troiae* appears in this version, but neither in the *deuxième mise en prose*, nor in Benoît de Sainte-Maure’s verse.³⁸

The *Histoire Ancienne jusqu’à César* also circulated widely over a similar period to the prose versions of the *Roman de Troie*. It claims to narrate the history of the world from the Creation to Julius Caesar’s reign. Two manuscripts contain a verse dedication to Rogier, châtelain de Lille, and their prose is interspersed with verse passages. As mentioned above, Paul Meyer suggests that these represent an early version of the text, because they offer details about the text’s

³⁵ Jung, p. 565.

³⁶ See the discussion in Cornish, pp. 89-95.

³⁷ Faivre d’Arcier, pp. 284-6 for evidence that although Guido principally used a ‘version méridionale’ of the *Roman de Troie*, Guido may have also had a copy of Dares in front of him.

³⁸ Nathaniel Griffin, the sole editor of the text, states in his Introduction, p. xv, that Guido translates directly from Benoît de Sainte-Maure’s verse, and, surprisingly, Jung, p. 563 appears to think so too. However, because Guido writes in Latin prose, it seems more likely that he was translating ‘via other transcriptions and prosifications of Benoît’s text [circulating at the time] in Italy’, where Guido says he lives, as Alison Cornish suggests, pp. 89-90. Based on close textual parallels, Chesney, pp. 52-60 proposes the *deuxième mise en prose* as at least one of Guido’s sources. Guido therefore most likely put the first and second *mise en prose* into Latin. It therefore seems unlikely that Guido knew the *troisième*, the *quatrième* or the *cinquième mise en prose*, if Jung is correct that these postdate his own work. See Cornish, pp. 95-9 more generally for a summary of the Italian reception of the *Troie* tradition as well as Arianna Punzi, ‘Le metamorfosi di Darete Frigio: la metafora troiana in Italia (con un’appendice sul MS Vat. Barb. lat. 3953)’, in *Storia, Geografia, Tradizioni Manoscritte*, ed. by Arianna Punzi and Gioia Paradisi (Rome: Critica di Testo, 2004), pp. 153-211.

patron and its composition, and thus that it was written in Northern France or Flanders in the early thirteenth century.³⁹ Gabrielle Spiegel offers a compelling reading of the possible historical motives for such a commission, when she situates the text as ‘the prehistory of Flanders’ and emphasises the importance of lineage within this text, which provides a

genealogically inherited system of status, prerogatives, values, and functions, the right to which, as a historically transmitted legacy, could not be denied.⁴⁰

Its section on Troy is a translation from Dares Phrygius, but late in its transmission, it converges with the prose *Roman de Troie* tradition, in a development which Paul Meyer called the second redaction.⁴¹ The *cinquième mise en prose du Roman de Troie* replaces the *Histoire Ancienne*’s own Troy section in sixteen manuscripts, which date from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁴² In a further three manuscripts, the *Histoire Ancienne*’s Troy section is again substituted for the *cinquième mise en prose du Roman de Troie*.⁴³ These copies equally rework the text more widely; they are accordingly termed the third redaction.⁴⁴

This convergence within the manuscript tradition makes the *Histoire Ancienne* doubly important to the later medieval French transmission of the Troy

³⁹ Paris, BnF, MS f. fr. 20125 and Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 2576; Meyer, p. 52.

⁴⁰ Spiegel, p. 116; see pp. 115-7 on the historical motives for this commission.

⁴¹ Meyer, pp. 63-75; see also *Histoire Ancienne jusqu’à César*, II (1999), pp. 245-6.

⁴² Avril, pp. 306-7 suggests that these versions, containing the *cinquième mise en prose*, may all derive from London, BL, MS 20 D I, which was produced at Naples for Robert of Anjou. See Meyer, pp. 49-51 for some possible locations of manuscript production, including Italy, Hainault and Acre. See Maria Laura Palermi, ‘*Histoire Ancienne jusqu’à César*: forme e percorsi del testo’, in *Storia*, ed. by Punzi and Paradisi, pp. 213-56 for an excellent summary of the manuscript transmission.

⁴³ *Histoire Ancienne jusqu’à César*, II (1999), p. 14.

⁴⁴ For example, the writer borrows from *La Chronique dite de Baudouin d’Avesnes*, or the *Histoire Universelle*, as de Visser-van Terwisga, *Histoire Ancienne jusqu’à César*, II (1999), p. 246, notes.

story. Furthermore, in four first-redaction *Histoire Ancienne* manuscripts, dating from the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century, the start of the Troy section is borrowed from the *cinquième mise en prose*, which is a testament to its success.⁴⁵ As well as providing another French translation of the *De Excidio Troiae*, the *Histoire Ancienne*'s fortunes in transmission are therefore inseparable from those of the prose *Roman de Troie*.

These texts thus show complex and flexible relations between translations, adaptations and *dérimages* that exemplify textual transmission in the medieval period, and indeed, this perspective has dominated scholarship on them to date. Three of these writers represent their own parts in this transmission by drawing analogies with another medium: the plastic arts. Guido delle Colonne extends the *première mise en prose du Roman de Troie*'s writer's metaphor when he translates from that text; that writer, I suggest, might well have known the *Histoire Ancienne*, which offers a distinct perspective on textual creation.

Translation, Idols and the Plastic Arts

The quotation from the *Histoire Ancienne*, with which I began, reveals the possibilities for representing translation metaphorically through the plastic arts.

⁴⁵ Jung, p. 507: London, BL, MS Add. 25884; Malibu, The J. Paul Getty Museum, MS Ludwig XIII 3; New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M. 516; Paris, BnF, MS f. fr. 250.

Mais on doit bien son dit nuer
 De raison, s'il est qui le face.
 Ausi com on nue la face
 D'une ymage, quant on la paint,
 Ausi est droit que cil se paint
 Qui recontre bone matere:
 Qu'il n'i oblit Deu Nostre Pere
 Quar li exemple de tot bien
 Vient de lui. (Para. 145, ll. 13-21)
 [But a writer should enhance his tale well, if he is the one who is producing it,
 with reason. Just as one enhances the face of an image, when one paints it, thus it
 is right that he who retells good material paints himself: that he does not forget
 the Lord our Father, for the examples of all goodness come from him.]

By placing this quotation as an epilogue to her article on the relationship between verse and prose in the *Histoire Ancienne*, Michèle Szkilnik has argued implicitly that this comment refers to the verse moralisations which occur throughout its prose narrative.⁴⁶ I would like to suggest an alternative reading that follows the definition offered by Tobler-Lommatzsch for 'nuer': 'entblößen' [to expose, to reveal].⁴⁷ Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski calls the writer a 'faithful painter'.⁴⁸ By painting, or even shading, the image's 'face', its contours are revealed: in adding a surface, the 'face | d'une ymage' is better defined, and more easily understood. *Raison* thus structures the *dit*, a term which is used later in the thirteenth century to describe written texts which are not put to music, shown by the title of one of Rutebeuf's works, 'Li dis des Jacobins'.⁴⁹ *Raison* is thus distinct from *dit*, the other definitions for which include 'Erzählungstoff' [the stuff of the tale] in Tobler-Lommatzsch.⁵⁰ They quote Bédier's glossary entry on a line from

⁴⁶ Michèle Szkilnik, 'Écrire en vers, écrire en prose: le choix de Wauchier de Denain', *Romania*, 107 (1986), 208-30 (p. 219).

⁴⁷ *TL*, VI (1965), col. 886, l. 47-col. 887, l. 2.

⁴⁸ Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, 'Moralization and History: Verse and Prose in the *Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César* (in B. N. fr. 20125)', *Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie*, 97 (1981), 41-6 (p. 45).

⁴⁹ Godefroy, IX (1898), p. 397.

⁵⁰ *TL*, II (1936), col. 1960, ll. 5-10.

Thomas's *Tristan*, 'E diz e vers i ai retrait' [And I have told/translated both the content and rhyming of the tale], which '[paraît signifier] la matière brute de la narration par opposition à sa mise en oeuvre poétique [(vers)]'. Even if the location of the 'matière brute' is unspecified, the text retroactively creates this concept of raw material, which may be found in a source text. This interpretation of *raison* has precedent in both the Latin and the Occitan traditions. Linda Paterson notes that in Marcabru's works, '*razo* can mean not only "reason", "what is right and reasonable", but "speech, argument"'.⁵¹ She observes that such a meaning for *razo* 'appears to have its origins in Rhetorical debate. *Ratio* can mean argumentation or reasoning'.⁵² *Raison*'s rhetorical meaning is perhaps uppermost; in this comparison, the teller must craft the *dit* to execute his or her text properly.

Careful work on a further layer on a pre-existing surface – or 'la face | d'une ymage' – therefore brings out its detail and significance, which has implications for this metaphor. 'Ausi com on nue' is placed as an analogy to the exhortation to 'son dit nuer | De raison', which refers to textual production, including this writer's own creative process. In the light of the lines from the prologue in which the writer claims to have translated his text from Latin – which is at least to some extent true for the Assyria, Thebes, Minotaur, Amazons and Hercules sections edited by de Visser-van Terwisga, as well as for the Troy section – this later passage offers an intermedial reading of the writer's act of linguistic translation.⁵³ Such a reading would liken translation to painting an

⁵¹ Linda M. Paterson, *Troubadours and Eloquence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 11.

⁵² Paterson, p. 12.

⁵³ See *Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César*, II (1999), pp. 232-40 for brief discussion of the Latin sources of the earlier sections.

‘ymage’, which means both three-dimensional sculpture in this period and two-dimensional representation through painting: Godefroy defines it as ‘statuette’ and also as ‘imitation par le dessin, la peinture, la sculpture, de l’apparence visible d’un objet’; Tobler-Lommatzsch defines it as ‘Bild, Bildnis (Malerei, Skulptur)’ [image, portrait (painting, sculpture)].⁵⁴ The possibility of ‘ymage’ referring to sculpture is most suggestive in relation to translation. It would indicate painting onto a surface that has already been formed and that has meaning, that is, to draw out the potential of the source text to make its meaning fully intelligible to an audience. This reading still works to some extent if ‘ymage’ is understood to refer to two-dimensional depiction: translation still draws out meaning by adding shading to the existing work on the ‘face’.

Furthermore, the writer explains that material is given to the storyteller. He or she ‘reconte bone matere’ [retells good material] (l. 18). The prefix ‘re’ here suggests that the story has already been told. Some of this ‘bone matere’ is not of the storyteller’s own making: ‘li exemple de tot bien’ [the examples of all goodness] (l. 20) come from God. The teller thus retells his or her tales within a longer chain of transmission.

When ‘on nue la face | d’une ymage’ [one enhances the face of an image] (ll. 15-16), this act provides a model to writers. Yet the teller or writer ‘se paint’ [paints himself] (l. 17): the writers paint themselves when they are recounting a tale. In this way, the *Histoire Ancienne* advises writers to model their creative processes after painters’ methods in order to nuance their own selves. The storyteller must provide the ‘raison’ that shapes the particular telling, and its

⁵⁴ Godefroy, IIII (1885), p. 545 and IX (1898), p. 782; *TL*, IIII (1960), col. 1340, l. 3.

interpretation. The moral overtones of ‘raison’ indicate the writer’s ongoing creation of his or her own morality and subjectivity, through depicting themselves while retelling stories. The narratives that the writer tells could originate in another language, for example, as some of the *Histoire Ancienne* does. A writer is responsible for his or her own morality, which is partly shaped through telling a story, but those narratives only belong to him or her for a short time.

In the principal addition to the verse *Roman de Troie* in both the *première mise en prose du Roman de Troie* and the *Historia Destructionis Troiae*, a further metaphor from the plastic arts is central to the conceptualisation of the processes of translation and textual transmission. This extra passage occurs just before Calchas and Achilles receive prophecies from the oracle at Delphi about the length and outcome of the war: the two texts offer an account of the origins of pagan idols and why the characters might believe in them, which draws on that given by medieval encyclopaedists including Isidore of Seville and Petrus Comestor.⁵⁵ Only a chosen few – here Calchas and Achilles – can understand the gods’ message and successfully interpret it for a wider audience. It comes implicitly in a divine language, whose restricted nature is frequently expressed by signs or riddles. The *première mise en prose du Roman de Troie* writer inserts these pagan prophecies, which predict the narrative correctly, within a Christian framework.

Ileuques poés veoir quoment les gens de celui tens estoient foux et de folle creance; quar ces dieus que cil creoient si fermement n’estoient autres choses que ymages de fust ou de cuivre et d’autre metal. (para. 80, ll. 2-5)

⁵⁵ See Jean Seznec, *La Survivance des dieux antiques: essai sur le rôle de la tradition mythologique dans l’humanisme et dans l’art de la renaissance* (London: Warburg Institute, 1940), pp. 15-21 on the encyclopaedic traditions.

[There you can see how, at that time, the people were mad and held mad beliefs; for these gods that they believed in so strongly were nothing but images made from wood or copper or other metal.]

The writer anticipates the implicit mirror image of Christian worship of relics.

This passage suggests that the pagans are mad because their gods are artificial images. They are not divine, but demonstrate the human desire to create. The writer then tries to explain, through a Christian optic, why these material gods' prophecies are so reliable:⁵⁶

[...] et dyables avoient tant de largece que il se metoient dedens et parloient as gens qui par folie les creoient, dont il estoient mainte fois deceüz. (para. 80, ll. 5-8)

[And the devils were so generous that they put themselves inside [the images] and talked to the people, who believed them because of their madness, through which they were disappointed/deceived numerous times.]

He doubles the pagans' idea of believing what inanimate objects say by creating a second layer of transmission, the devils, who

ont pooir de dire la certainté des choses qui sont a avenir, qui oscures sunt a l'humanité en aucunes manieres; quar onques ne perdirent celui sens que Nostre Sire lor dona quant il les cria premierement [...] puis que il orent toute santité perdue, en lor ne demoura point de verité. (para. 80, ll. 8-16)

[have the capacity to tell of things that will happen with certainty, for they never lost that wisdom that Our Lord gave them when he initially created them [...] because they had lost all holiness, no truth remained in them.]

'Sens' signifies both 'Verstand, Klugheit' [reasoning, cleverness, wisdom or intelligence] and 'Sinn, Bedeutung, Inhalt' [sense, meaning, content], as Tobler-Lommatzsch outlines.⁵⁷ The devils therefore act as intermediaries who deliver and interpret messages from God to humans. God gave the devils the capacity to prophesy, but because they have fallen, they lack truth. The devils speak through

⁵⁶ See Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-making in Medieval Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 58 on the historical development of attributing voices to idols.

⁵⁷ *TL*, IX (1973), col. 457, l. 5; col. 459, l. 1.

the idols, to whom the prophets listen; they finally inform other humans who do not have prophetic capacity.

The presence of these devils highlights the unpredictability of verbal transmission, and potentially of translation. They speak through the idols, delivering the ‘sens’ that emanates from God, but which does not bear his ‘verité’. They do not transmit ‘verité’, which here takes on a moral quality that crucially exceeds narrative coherence. Within the fiction, these prophecies predict events correctly. However, because they mislead the characters into suffering and harm, they therefore lack ‘verité’; for example, ‘si lor celerent il bien le grant damage que il lor en avient’ [they hid from them the great harm that would befall them] (para. 80, ll. 20-21). This truthful quality partly depends on a firm point of origin with a reliable transmission history, that is, the word of a Christian God, unmediated by devils.

Guido delle Colonne’s *Historia Destructionis Troiae* further investigates why people believe idols’ prophecies, by asking how pagans began to make and worship idols in the first place.⁵⁸ Michael Camille situates this passage as offering ‘basically a euhemeristic argument’, that is, making idols originates in a desire to commemorate.⁵⁹ Through discussing how idols are made, these lines raise the question of why human – and secondary – acts of creation are so influential despite their secular, cultural status.

⁵⁸ For a discussion of this passage in relation to the history and theory of idol-making, see Camille, pp. 57-58.

⁵⁹ Camille, p. 57; compare Simon Gaunt, *Marco Polo’s Le Devisement du Monde: Narrative Voice, Language and Diversity* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2013), pp. 94-102 on Marco Polo’s account of the first idol.

Guido first presents human creation of idols other than the Christian. He notes how Jews and pagans – to whom he attributes classical beliefs – both claim to have created the first image:

Quod per aduentum domini nostri Ihesu Christi, saluatoris, omnis ydolatria funditus euerit et cessare debet. Vnde Iudei dicunt quod Ismael primo simulacrum luto confinxit; gentiles autem primum Prometheum simulachrum de luto fecisse dogmatizauerunt atque ab eo ars simulachra et statuas fingendi processit. (p. 94)

[Through the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour, all idolatry was completely overthrown and had to cease. This is why the Jews say Ishmael fashioned the first image from clay, but the pagans say dogmatically that Prometheus made the first image from clay, and that from him developed the art of making images and statues.] (Book 10, ll. 134-9)

These lines juxtapose three examples of creation from different religious traditions, all of which are associated with different languages: Hebrew for Judaism, Greek and Latin for the classical traditions and Latin for Christianity.⁶⁰ Guido places the Jews and pagans into a hostile contact zone, in which they dispute the origins of the first image. By placing two rival myths of creation together, Guido suggests that these acts of cultural reproduction have now been subsumed by the New Testament.

Though it is unlikely that he intended it as such, these multiple acts of plastic creation introduce a suggestive avatar for Guido's own act of textual reproduction. Worshipping idols invokes the absent, whether that be a god or the person upon whom the idol is modelled. Within this text, which is posited as a translation, these idols may be read as an intermedial metaphor, drawn from the plastic arts, for that very act: translation too calls into being a concept of an original, as noted in the Introduction, and equally in Chapter One in relation to

⁶⁰ See Irven M. Resnick, '*Lingua Dei, Lingua Hominis*: Sacred Language and Medieval Texts', *Viator*, 21 (1990), 51-74 (pp. 60-74) on the medieval fortunes of the three sacred languages.

Benoît's presentation of his own textual production. A notion of the original can only be conceived of with reference to a copy that has been shaped by humans. The comparison between translation – a human act of creation – and idol making in Guido is ethically more difficult than that in the *Histoire Ancienne*, because it indicates that Guido's own act may not be fully sanctioned. The *Histoire Ancienne* writer notes that at least some stories originate with God, and do not belong to the writers. He does not suggest that its 'ymage' or idol is necessarily intended for worship, but if so, that worship is certainly Christian.

The word 'simulachrum' particularly suggests that the process of idol creation mooted here envisages translation, because it refers both to images and to writing. It most generally signifies a 'likeness, image, form, representation, semblance'; its predominant meaning is of 'images formed by art, esp. of statues of the gods'.⁶¹ However, it can also signify 'a description or portraiture of character', by implication, a written portrait of a human being, as in this example quoted in Lewis and Short from Livy, 'non inseram simulacrum viri copiosi, quae dixerit referendo' [I shall not include here a pale reflection of this eloquent man by reporting what he said].⁶² This definition fits with Tobler-Lommatzsch's definition of *image* as 'Bild, Bildnis' [image, portrait].⁶³ Guido's images first double the human form in clay, but they are also transmitted through translation in written description. In this way, while he inserts Jewish and classical beliefs into a Christian progress narrative, Guido thus conceives of artificial reproduction as

⁶¹ Lewis and Short, p. 1704, cols 1-2.

⁶² Lewis and Short, p. 1704, col. 2.

⁶³ *TL*, III (1960), col. 1340, l. 3.

opposed to the natural and divine. Marked by linguistic translation and a long chain of transmission, such myths of origin for non-Christian idols prove a suggestive figure for Guido's translation of the Trojan story, which happened long before Christianity and so long ago that accounts of it are always partial and reliant on others.

The moment of cultural production that Guido delle Colonne describes in most detail is when the first image becomes a deity. This account follows the tales of Jewish and pagan creation of statues. The *Histoire Ancienne* writer offers a rationale for Guido's decision to focus on this story. The first king it mentions is Ninus, who, on the death of his father, 'mirabiliter simulachrum quasi simile patri suo confingere mandavit' (p. 94) [ordered an image constructed of gold which was amazingly like his father] (Book 10, ll. 145-6). This idol is a perfect translation itself, a 'mirabiliter simulacrum'.

The idol's name is immediately supplemented in translation:

Et sic, non multo postmodum tempore procedente, spiritus immundus in hoc ydolum Belli regis ingressus responsa petentibus exhibebat. Vnde apud Assyrios illud ydolum dictum est Belus. Alii dixerunt Bel, alii Beel, alii Baal, alii Belphegor, alii Belzabuch, alii Beelzebub. Et huius ydoli exemplo gentiles processerunt ad ydolorum cultum, fingentes homines mortuos esse deos et pro diis adorabant eos. (pp. 94-5)

[And so, after not much time had gone by, an unclean spirit entered into this idol of King Belus and gave answers to those who sought them. This is why this idol was called Belus among the Assyrians. Some say Bel, some Beel, some Baal, some Beelphegor, some Belzabuch, some Beelzebub. From the example of this idol, the pagans proceeded to the worship of idols, imagining that dead men were gods and adoring them as gods.] (Book 10, ll. 151-7)

First, as in the *première mise en prose du Roman de Troie*, the idol's capacity for prophecy is attributed to ventriloquism. The Assyrians' name for the idol is translated into six languages, which indicates a rapid proliferation of knowledge. Though a proper noun 'en tant que tel reste toujours intraduisible', as Jacques

Derrida notes, it nevertheless has to be integrated into the syntax, sound-patterns and grammar of the target language.⁶⁴ This transmission therefore crucially suggests how the idols' example spread so that idols were created and worshipped more widely. Guido presents a reproduction supplementing a plastic original that is absent, because Ninus's father is dead.

Translating the idol's name into several languages soon gives rise to multiple forms of belief. The pagans begin to 'finge[re] homines mortuos esse deos'. 'Fingere' occurs twice in this passage; *confingo*, used when Ninus has the idol made, means both 'to form, fashion, fabricate' and equally to 'invent, devise, feign, pretend', and thus, by implication, to imitate.⁶⁵ This pair of complex words is essential to the concept of fiction, and most specifically here, to that of translation. One modern commentator who offers an understanding of the concept of fiction – through a discussion of the first putative artefact – is Jacques Lacan, as noted in the Introduction.⁶⁶ He suggests that the first 'signifiant façonné' is the pot, fashioned from clay like the Jewish and pagan idols Guido describes.⁶⁷ This signifier is at once empty, enabling us to conceive of the void, and at the same time, self-referential.

Le vide et le plein sont par le vase introduits dans un monde qui, de lui-même, ne connaît rien de tel.⁶⁸

The pot produces this space, which gives us the capacity to imagine emptiness and fullness. We must make the artefact in order to conceive of nothingness, which is really a void. The pot produces the concept of the space inside it. In the same way,

⁶⁴ 'Tours de Babel', p. 208.

⁶⁵ Lewis and Short, p. 414, col. 1.

⁶⁶ *Le Séminaire Livre VII*, pp. 144-8.

⁶⁷ *Le Séminaire Livre VII*, p. 145.

⁶⁸ *Le Séminaire Livre VII*, p. 145.

Lacan suggests, writing is a created artefact that makes absent things representable, and can create new things too. The use of a form of the verb *fingere* here suggests a parallel process whereby the absent are conjured into being retroactively: the image of Ninus's father, though made out of gold, represents something absent, and thus something new is created. The image grows to become a worshipped god. This memory generated by the idol is not consonant with a living existence, even if he was a king.

Via this image, origins of pagan belief are shown as retroactively produced in order to commemorate something that can never be recaptured: Belus's life. Jacques Derrida notes the phenomenon of the original 'qui se donne en se modifiant' in translation, and a similar process is at work here.⁶⁹ Belus is both reproduced and created anew as an idol in gold. Indeed, this god's name is immediately conceived not just as different from Ninus's father as 'Bel', but multilingually. Belus's image, voiced by devils, enters a signifying chain as others create new gods in imitation through translation. Neither explicitly devotional nor divine, this secondary act offers a means of thinking about translating history. Perhaps Guido omits Christianity from this analysis because he cannot envisage it as fiction as clearly as the accounts of idol creation attributed to the Assyrians, the Jews or Prometheus.

In the light of the *Histoire Ancienne*'s comparison of textual production with painting an 'ymage', Guido's claim to complete representation of his stated source may be read metaphorically in the amazing *simulachrum* of Ninus's father. These acts of cultural reproduction, though not sanctioned by the narrator, offer an

⁶⁹ 'Tours de Babel', p. 217.

image of Guido's own act of creation through translation. Given Latin's continuous usage, Guido's image of his purported source – Dares Phrygius's *De Excidio Troiae* – is a plausible fiction.

Guido occludes his French-language sources and says he is simply adding to a Latin original to finish it off. He claims that he 'perfectur et completum fecit' [finished off and completed] (p. 275) Dictys Cretensis's *Ephemeridos Belli Troiani*, the only text he mentions in his epilogue, which now accompanies Dares Phrygius as one of his given sources. This assertion is well situated within David Hult's discussion of historical prose writers' 'attempted hoaxes' for a knowing audience.⁷⁰ Guido does not state how he filled in the gaps between Cornelius's version and his complete book:

Quamquam autem hos libellos quidam Romanus, Cornelius nomine, Salustii magni nepos, in Latinam linguam transferre curauerit, tamen, dum laboraret nimium esse brevis, particularia ystorie ipsius que magis possunt allicere animos auditorum pro nimia breuitate indecenter obmisit. (p. 4)
[Although a certain Roman by the name of Cornelius, nephew of the great Sallust, took the trouble to translate these books into Latin, still, since he tried to be extremely brief, he improperly omitted, through extreme brevity, the particulars of this history which would be more attractive to the minds of his hearers. In the contents of this little book, therefore, will be found written everything that took place according to the complete history.] (Prologue, ll. 47-53)

Guido's source does not guarantee the completeness of his text; rather, in translating, he aims for completeness. Here, fidelity results from supplementary production. It takes the form of internal narrative coherence specific to the *Historia Destructionis Troiae*, which prefers universal coverage to transposing the stated source faithfully. It is a fantasy of perfect fidelity that exceeds the thing it

⁷⁰ David Hult, 'Poetry and the Translation of Knowledge in Jean de Meun', in *Poetry, Knowledge and Community in Late Medieval France*, ed. by Rebecca Dixon and Finn Sinclair (Cambridge: Brewer, 2008), pp. 19-41 (p. 30).

seeks to represent. In his *Le Monolinguisme de l'autre*, Jacques Derrida charts translation's capacity to displace a point of origin; he observes that 'il s'érige même comme désir de reconstituer, de restaurer, mais en vérité d'inventer une *première langue*' (p. 118). It is clear that the translation desires – and invents – the original. Derrida's remark particularly illuminates the retroactive power of Guido's Latin translation which occludes its vernacular transmission history.

If the *première mise en prose du Roman de Troie* and Guido's presentation of the image or idol figure the writers' textual production through analogy with other forms of supplementary cultural reproduction, then this has striking implications for how the writers conceive of translation. They understand their processes of textual production through metaphors drawn from the plastic arts, and indeed invoke sculptures worshipped as idols. The writers represent the complexity of the traditions of transmission within which they are working as well as the importance of their own contribution. Their images demonstrate the extent to which their translations and adaptations retroactively create their sources; in doing so, they present the importance of their own creative act in relation to those which have preceded it. These metaphors provide a suggestive glimpse of how medieval French writers conceived of their own productions and traditions.

Translatio Networks

The *Histoire Ancienne*, the prose *Troie* and the *Historia Destructionis Troiae* writers retroactively envisage a previous stage of production, thus presenting their own writing as a secondary process. The passages I have discussed thus far are drawn from longer texts, one of which is explicitly structured through a narrative

of *translatio imperii*, and all of which allude to it. The purpose of this section is to explore further the implications of the metaphors I have analysed for the texts' accounts of their transmission in translation and their wider trajectories.

To begin with, the Troy story bears strong foundational power, while raising questions about that capacity and the stability of any points of origin. Stories of Rome, Britain and France among others are frequently formed in relation to that city. In the *Aeneid* and the *Roman d'Eneas*, for example, Troy's fall and the consequent exile of the Trojans, is the occasion for the eventual foundation and rise of Rome. However, Troy's potential to offer origins for any place or empire is partial and provisional. This partiality is present to some extent in the *translatio imperii* narrative, which suggests that remaining a world power for long is impossible. The story of Troy is inseparable from its longer-term context of shifting loci of power; this is especially clear in texts like the *Histoire Ancienne* and the prose *Roman de Troie*, which are concerned to locate Troy historically and geographically, but texts like Guido delle Colonne's and Benoît's, which focus principally on the Trojan narrative, also allude to its wider situation.

In the *Histoire Ancienne* and the prose *Roman de Troie*, Troy's legacy has consequences for specific present moments in precise geographical locations. The Trojan War is placed within *translatio imperii* in these narratives, but the model of translation presented within these texts does not invariably follow a linear progression: origins and end points are depicted as multiple and accruing. These texts present simultaneous, continuous translation zones that are contingent upon negotiation and action. This optic centres and decentres Troy, because it is located within a series of geographical and genealogical networks. David Abulafia's

observation on those who lived on and travelled around the Mediterranean

describes these texts' depiction of Troy well; he notes that they participate

directly, in some cases, in cross-cultural trade, in the movement of religious and other ideas, or, no less significantly, in naval conflicts for mastery over the sea routes.⁷¹

Furthermore, I suggest that translation is essential to the depiction of Troy as such a centre of geographical movement.

Out of these texts, the *Histoire Ancienne* perhaps most clearly presents migration and translation as a series of long-term trends which take place over overlapping periods of time. These phenomena give rise to networks of translation. The *Histoire Ancienne* highlights events that happen in places when the power base has moved away or before it has arrived. Although it is broadly structured according to a *translatio imperii* narrative, with Paul Meyer labelling the sections *Genèse, Premiers Temps de l'Assyrie et de la Grèce, Thèbes, Le Minotaure, Les Amazones, Hercule, Troie, Énée, Histoire de Rome*, these labels belie a text in which stories of origin accrue throughout.⁷² Mary Coker Joslin suggests that it is likely the writer knew of Otto of Freising's *Two Cities*.⁷³ Indeed, Meyer's section title '*Le Minotaure, Amazone, Hercule*' already indicates the narrative's geographically digressive tendencies.

There are several references to the text's translated nature, particularly in the verse sections that are contained in two manuscripts, for example:⁷⁴

⁷¹ David Abulafia, *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean* (London: Allen Lane, 2011), p. xviii.

⁷² Meyer, pp. 38-49.

⁷³ Mary Coker Joslin, 'Introduction', to *The Heard Word, A Moralized History: The Genesis Section of the 'Histoire Ancienne' in a Text from Saint Jean d'Acre* (University, Miss.: Romance Monographs, 1986), pp. 19-67 (p. 46).

⁷⁴ BnF, MS f. fr. 20125; Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 2576.

S'il veut, en romans dou latin
Li cuic si traire lonc la letre
Que plus ne mains n'i sera metre. (II, Prologue, ll. 266-8)
[If he [the patron, Rogier de Lisle] wishes, I will aim to translate the writing word
for word into French from Latin for him, in such a way that he will not be able to
add or remove anything from it.]

Si com nos trovons ou latin (II, p. 307, 20th verse passage, l. 146)
[As we find in the Latin]

Translation from Latin presents this act of textual production as secondary; it equally occludes earlier layers of transmission, such as the passage of stories about Assyria from that region into Latin. This language functions as an *avant-première langue*; by invoking a source language, the notion of the original is created, and thus textual production is presented as multiple: the writer conceives of his text as part of longer literary processes.

This idea of layered textual production informs the writer's presentation of historical causation within the text. For example, he notes a first cause for antipathy between the Trojans and the Greeks that Dares Phrygius does not mention:

Segnor, adonques quant cil rois Tros regnoit en Troie, si regnoit en Micenes uns rois: Tantalus estoit apelés par nom. Cil rois Tantalus guerroia le roi Tros et si li ocist son fill Ganimedem, dont mout sofrirent et li un et li autre de paine et de malaventure. E ci fu la premeraine semence de la haine et de la chorine des Grigois a ceaus de la terre de Troies. E si vos dirai coment. (I, para. 147, ll.12-17).
[Lords, thus when this king Tros ruled Troy, a king ruled Micenes: he was called Tantalus by name. This king Tantalus fought king Tros and killed his son Ganimedem, through which both sides suffered pain and misfortune. And this was the first seed of the hatred and the deep-seated feelings of the Greeks towards those of the land of Troy. And I will tell you how this happened.]

Here, this history is marked already as translation: the proper names bear their Latin endings, carried over from their source.⁷⁵ The writer depicts peoples defining themselves in relation to one another, through a geographical contact

⁷⁵ Dares Phrygius, as Meyer, p. 43 suggests.

zone. Tantalus and Ganymede's established mythical identities are subsumed to become actors in this feud. The proper nouns, which indicate Latin transliteration, mark the process of translation that has given rise to this passage. This plural, layered process of textual production perhaps influenced this writer's conception of multiple causation within the text. 'Premeraine semence' suggests sexual reproduction initially, with the killing of Ganymede acting as the seed which will later germinate into the Trojan war, and secondly, a process that evolves and grows over time. The layered languages parallel his understanding of how events are caused through this metaphor, which might indeed both be read in relation to the plot and to the textual creation that enables us to learn of those events.

In the *Histoire Ancienne*, Troy is located through both population movement and translation. It is always defined in relation to somewhere else, creating a translation zone where two or more cities, peoples or time periods come into linguistic contact, often through trade or war.⁷⁶ The writer locates Troy initially within much longer and more geographically expansive historical networks.

Troie n'estora mie cil Laomedon, ains i habita primes Friga, qui fu de la lignee des fiz Japhet, et de son non ot a non la terre premerainement Frige. Et a cestui comence la premere habitations de la terre et de la cité que puis fu, si com vos orés, Troie apelee. Et puis regna de cele ligniee meisme li rois Dardanus, de cui non la terre ot a non Dardania. E puis i regna Erictonius, qui fu pere le roi Tros. Et de cestui roi qui Tros ot a non, ot a non la terre et la cités ou il habitoient, Troie. (I, para. 147, ll. 3-12)

[Laomedon did not erect Troy at all, for Friga, who was descended from the sons of Japhet, lived there first, and from his name, the land was first named Frige. And with him begins the first settlement of the land and of the city that was later, as you will hear, called Troy. And then king Dardanus, of the same lineage, reigned, from whose name, the land was named Dardania. And then Erictonius ruled there, who was king Tros's father. And from this king who was called Troy, the land and the city where they lived was called Troy.]

⁷⁶ Apter, pp. 5-6.

Troy's name is explained with reference to its earlier incarnations, some of which likewise take their names from their ruler, in a synecdoche of power. The name of the king pervades that of the place, like a familiar spirit. The place is not naturally equivalent to the king – and vice versa – but successive kings rename the place, equating themselves with it. For example, Friga and Dardanus both name the 'terre'; Tros renames both the land and the city that springs up since Dardanus's reign. This changing landscape remains tied by name to the king, even if Erictonius does not rename the land after himself, highlighting that this name change is a choice. The plural 'habitoient', possibly a scribal error for the singular, simply reinforces the artificial equivalence: in some way, 'la terre et la cités' becomes a singular entity, equivalent to 'cestui roi', who all share the same name, Troy. This apparent process of translation in fact reveals the untranslatability of proper nouns, as they change but do not offer continuity.⁷⁷ Linguistic development notes the formation, under successive rulers, of the land that becomes the site of the city of Troy.

Unlike the *Histoire Ancienne*, so concerned with genealogy, in the prose *Troie*, Troy is principally defined geographically. Although it too explains how the king, Tros, 'l'apella Troye par son nom' (para. 2 bis., ll. 2-3) [called it Troy by his name], it most importantly notes Troy's spatial relations:

⁷⁷ On the untranslatability of proper nouns, see Simon Gaunt, 'Untranslatable: A Response', in *Rethinking Medieval Translation*, ed. by Campbell and Mills, pp. 243-55 (esp. pp. 247-8).

Troye fu en une partie d'Aise que l'en apelle Turquie outre la mer de Grece; et de la partie dou souleil levant s'estent la terre de Perse, par quoi l'on vait jusques a la mer d'Inde; et devers soileil couchant le bat la mer de Grece que l'en apele Bouche d'Avide, qui s'en entre, par devant la noble cité de Constantinople, par un estroit bras en la mer que l'en apele la mer Majour: non mie por ce qu'ele le soit, mais a comparation de ceste mer de Bouche d'Avide qui est toute pleine d'isles. Par devers Midi, outre Turquie, siet la terre d'Ermenie, par quoi l'en vait en Surie et en la terre d'Egypte, et par deverz Septentrion, c'est devers tramontane, outre Turquie, si est Jorgie, qui tient les rives sur la mer Majour dont nos avons parlé. (para. 2, ll. 1-14)

[Troy was in a part of Asia that is called Turkey beyond the sea of Greece; and on the side of the rising sun stretches the land of Persia, by which one goes up to the sea of India, and towards the setting sun, the sea of Greece, which we call Bouche d'Avide, touches it, which enters before the noble city of Constantinople, by a narrow promontory in the sea that is called the Great Sea, not at all because it is great, but by comparison with the sea of Bouche d'Avide which is full of islands. Towards the south, beyond Turkey, lies the land of Armenia, by which one goes to Syria, and to the land of Egypt, and towards the north, that is towards tramontane [Italianate word for north], beyond Turkey, is Georgia, which has its banks on the Great Sea of which we have spoken.]

Given that this passage is taken from a manuscript that only contains the prose

Troie, this geographical description unsurprisingly focuses on that city.⁷⁸ It

emphasises its central, accessible position; as David Abulafia has remarked of one of Troy's early historical incarnations, it 'sat astride the trade routes' which linked the Mediterranean and the Black Sea; as the prose *Troie* writer observes, it thus connects lands as far flung as India, Egypt and Georgia.⁷⁹ Indeed, the prose *Troie* writer equally notes Troy's location as a contact zone:

Si avés entendu coment Troy fu en noble país et en bone marche por assembler illeques genz de toutepars dou siecle par mer et par terre. (para. 2. bis, ll. 6-9)
[Thus you have heard how Troy was set within a noble land and in a good borderland to assemble people from everywhere in this world by sea and by land.]

He thus notes how central it is to the movement of goods and peoples across the world; its contact zones stretch into all three continents.

⁷⁸ BnF, MS. f. fr. 1612.

⁷⁹ Abulafia, p. 45.

The *Histoire Ancienne* does focus on locating Troy in genealogical terms, but in order to chart the Trojans' progress, it shows their migrations to build new settlements, which eventually leads to Aeneas founding Rome. Troy has multiple afterlives, whether through commemorative, retroactive renaming of new settlements, through population movement, or both. The people of Troy try to settle a number of times on land, and establish themselves reasonably successfully in Macedonia (Jung, p. 403, para. 69, ll. 11-12).⁸⁰ Some of them leave again, only to fail to settle in Sardinia (Jung, p. 403, para. 69, ll. 14-15), before finally deciding to found their own city in the sea, which is now Venice (Jung, p. 403, para. 69, l. 20), for the following reason:

Il distrent qu'en terre ne herbergeroient il mie que par ce ne clamast aucuns sor aus segnorie, mes en la mer, ou nus ne savoit que dire, feroient il lor habitations et lor manandises. (Jung, p. 403, para. 69, ll. 24-6)
[They said that they would never settle on the land, because thus no-one would claim lordship over them, but rather, they would make their dwellings and their houses on the sea, where no-one could say anything.]

The Trojans thus partly recreate the main source of Troy's wealth, sea trade. Venice is a particularly apt suggestion for a new Troy, as it grew rich as a port linking Asia and Europe, especially in the period when the *Histoire Ancienne* was written.⁸¹ A second wave of geographical translation takes place when Antenor is exiled from Troy on the return of Hector's sons (Jung, p. 404, para. 70).

When more Trojans arrive in Venice, events demonstrate how precarious the Trojan identity is in such dispersed circumstances. Antenor's arrival at the fledgling Trojan settlement very nearly results in another Trojan war, this time between the Trojans, because he fails to recognise his countrymen when he

⁸⁰ All quotations referring to the Troy section of the *Histoire Ancienne* to Jung's edition of this part of the text are given in parentheses within the text by page, paragraph and line number.

⁸¹ Abulafia, p. 327, p. 330.

arrives there, having been exiled from the remains of Troy by Hector's sons (Jung, p. 404, para. 71, ll. 3-8). The other Trojan exiles see him as Trojan enough to rule in Anthenoride, as they call the city, but he is not as Trojan as the royal bloodline, which returns to Troy to resettle it several times over (Jung, p. 405, para. 71, ll. 27-36). Though Antenor is often depicted as betraying Troy, he manages to preserve sufficient Trojan noble identity here to identify with the exiles so well that he rules the city and they name it after him. This geographical translation of Troy is successful because Antenor manages to find other Trojans in a place that they build: uniquely, the site is not a contact zone with other nations. The *Histoire Ancienne* thus presents the multiple, coterminous translations of Troy to Macedonia, Sardinia, Venice and the resettlement of part of Troy by Hector's sons.

Furthermore, the prose *Troie* writer shows that such networks of migration and settlement are equally linguistic ones. These historical movements occur over expansive, overlapping periods. When the writer discusses how large Greece was formerly, he notes the linguistic evidence that indicates the political freight of geographical translation within one contact zone:

Les gens se traient volentiers por la seürté as illes, dont il a en Grece sans nombre, qui toutes furent habitees jusqu'a tens qui il orent la seignorie des Romains, et meïsmant de Constantin, qui longement le tindrent en païs. Et por icele seürté laisserent il mout de ces illes et se retrairent a habiter a large terre, ou il faisoient plus de lour profit et de leur aises. Et por ce fu li païs apelé Romanie, et changa le non de Grece. Car encore, se vos demandés a un Grezois en son lengauge quez honz il est, il respondera que il est Romain, quar ce li samble une maniere de franchise. Et surquetout, quant il avient que aucun Grizois veuille franchir son serf de liberal franchise, si li dist "Soies romain." (para. 3, ll. 10-22)

[The people moved themselves willingly to safety in the countless Greek islands, which were all inhabited until the time that they were ruled by the Romans, and especially of Constantine, who held them peacefully for a long time. And because of this safety, they left many of these islands and moved back to living on large bits of land, where they did more for their own benefit and for their comfort. And because of this, the land was called Romania, and the name of Greece changed. For even now, if you ask a Greek in his language what sort of man he is, he will reply that he is Roman, because this seems a kind of freedom to him. And above all, when any Greek wants to free his serf, with generous freedom, he says to him, “Be Roman...”]

This area is marked principally by population movement through conflict and peacemaking; the latter provokes a commemorative renaming of the land of Greece, and informs contemporary attitudes to national identity and personhood. ‘Traire’ and ‘retraire’ indicate geographical movement. Their use in proximity to a portrayal of multilingualism, linguistic hybridity and translation means that here, they work to connect that physical movement with translation. Migration makes the Greeks reconsider their name, and they rename themselves ‘romain’, which is a national descriptor, but increasingly associated with a set of values that includes freedom – including that of movement – and nobility. This linguistic identification commemorates that migration, and indeed long outlasts it. The inhabitants of Greece call their country Romanie, and so its nominal metropolis is implicitly Rome. Though ‘romain’ retains some of the national weight appropriate to the proper noun, it connotes a set of values, and thus Greek partly appropriates it as a common adjective.

The French-language writer presents the people’s nationality as ‘Grezois’, but ironically, the ‘Grezois’ sees himself as ‘romain’; he may even have the choice of two identities. ‘Romain’ might function as a public identity that seems a ‘maniere de franchise’. ‘Franchise’ might be read here as another layer of identity, which supersedes the upright Roman by referring to the Franks as a benchmark

for freedom, honesty and upright behaviour. This tradition is shown famously in the *Chanson de Roland*. It therefore implies a moral aspect within *translatio imperii*.⁸² This passage carefully notes the close relationship between language, nationality and status: here, the ‘honz’ is ‘romain’; when slaves are freed, they become ‘romain’ and therefore, their status is elevated to that of a free man.

The prose *Troie* writer, moreover, notes the converse situation: the Greek language and religious practices endure in southern Italy, a reflection of Byzantine influence.

Par toute Sezille parole on encore en plusours leus grizois, et par toute Calabre li païsant ne parlent se grizois non. Encore en Puille en maint leuz font il le servize Nostre Seignor es mostiers a la maniere de Grece et en grizois langage: por quoi il apert et voirs est sans faille qu’ils furent anciënement tous grizois. (para. 4, ll. 6-12)

[Greek is spoken still in many places throughout Sicily, and throughout Calabria, the peasants only speak in Greek. In many places in Puglia, they still hold the mass of our Lord in churches in the Greek fashion and in the Greek language: from which it appears and it is true, without doubt, that they were all Greek, a long time ago.]

Translation zones and contact zones overlap: both languages and religious practice do not always follow shifts in power. If they do so, this process can happen very slowly and only within limited groups within the population; for example, ‘li païsant’ keep using an older language.

Translation zones long outlast the conflicts that witness shifts in world power from the Trojans to the *pax Romana* and beyond. Renaming settlements commemorates past movements of people long after the political situation has changed. This description complicates linear narratives of translation by imagining legacies of events that have long since passed, and that appear to

⁸² See Kinoshita, p. 29 for an analysis of what is at stake in calling oneself *franc* in the *Chanson de Roland*.

reverse *translatio imperii*: the idea of Rome is retroactively created and maintained in Greece, supposedly its historical precursor, whilst in Italy, Greek ideas and culture live on.

These prose texts envisage Troy's multiple historical origins, which in turn locate it within a series of developing contact zones. In the prose *Troie*, these contact zones are conceived as a series of sea routes, by which trade and war are both easily conducted, and which make Troy strategically important. On the other hand, the *Histoire Ancienne* offers striking evidence for the continued simultaneity of these networks and the understanding of translation in zones that are geographically and linguistically provisional and negotiated: translation – and thus national identity – cannot be periodised teleologically or indeed without reference to its geographical reach.

The Next Generation: *The Roman de Landomata*

Prose is an especially apt vehicle for these longer-term histories, because medieval French prose writers in this tradition frequently continue stories. Though this phenomenon is not unknown in verse (*Partonopeus de Blois* is a good example), it is extremely common in prose. The prose *Troie* is accompanied in twenty manuscripts by a continuation called the *Roman de Landomata*.⁸³ Two scholars who have written on this textual tradition believe that it existed prior to the prose *Troie* and could even predate the verse *Roman de Troie*. J. W. Cross

⁸³ J. W. Cross, '*Le Roman de Landomata*': *A Critical Edition* (unpublished PhD thesis: University of Connecticut, 1974), pp. 53-5; see Constans, VI (1912), p. 311 for his brief appraisal. Harry Williams, 'Laodamas in the *Prose Roman de Troie*', *Romance Philology*, 7 (1953), 143-55. Further references to the *Roman de Landomata* are to this article, the only published edition, and included in parentheses within the text, by article page number and manuscript folio and column number.

argues that the text exhibits characteristics associated with *chansons de geste*, and therefore proposes an early original date of composition; Egidio Gorra simply asserts that ‘tale narrazione dunque non può provenire dal *Roman de Troie*, ma doveva esistere prima di esso’.⁸⁴ This hypothesis does fit with the many *chansons de geste* that were put into prose, most famously, the *Chanson de Roland* as the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicles*, and these prose versions did circulate widely in Italy. However, such arguments rest on the single manuscript in which the text is independent of the prose *Troie*, BnF, MS f. fr. 821. It is also possible that no earlier version existed, but that a writer well-versed in the *chanson de geste* tradition decided to continue the *Roman de Troie* story; after all, the *Roman de Landomata* tells the tale of an avenger and shows signs of developing into a blood feud.

However, BnF, MS f. fr. 821 is organised around the histories of Troy and Rome and their place within a universal history tradition, as well as their consonance with didactic texts: it begins with a section on Hercules and the Amazons; it then presents Boethius’s *Complainte de Philosophie* in French translation, a history of the life of Jesus Christ, *Enseignements à Alexandre* and the *Dits des Sages*; it then includes an abridged *Histoire Universelle*, a text of the verse *Roman de Troie* and the Roman section of the *Histoire Ancienne* before the *Roman de Landomata*, which followed by the *Histoire du Roi Alexandre*.⁸⁵ There is not a single *chanson de geste* in this manuscript. Rather, *Landomata* is placed as the predecessor to Alexander, who famously traced his lineage back to Troy, in

⁸⁴ Cross, pp. 53-5; Gorra, p. 247.

⁸⁵ Information from online BnF catalogue at <http://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf>, accessed 10/5/2012.

conquering Asia. This manuscript thus locates the *Roman de Landomata* within the context of the *romans antiques* and their legacy. In some manuscripts, this continuation is unmarked or marked in accordance with the rest of the text; in others, it is marked as a continuation from Benoît de Sainte-Maure's narrative.⁸⁶

In this manuscript, the *Roman de Landomata* is not really presented as an independent story: its occurrence without the prose *Roman de Troie* would seem to be most logically explained by the presence of the verse version. This replacement is interesting in that someone has selected the verse text over the prose text in the fourteenth century, well after the thirteenth-century 'explosion in the production of French prose texts', but this change does not seem to bring the status of the *Landomata* as a continuation of the Troy story into contention.⁸⁷

Scholars have equally discussed the writer's source of inspiration. One editor of the text, Harry Williams, proposes that 'the germ of the idea, spread through legend, sufficed to incite [the writer's] literary powers'.⁸⁸ Following Jung's conviction that 'il est inutile de postuler une source, qu'on n'a d'ailleurs toujours pas trouvée', I suggest we need not even look to legend, and that Constans's argument that the writer 'avait sans doute à sa disposition une source byzantine', supported by Meyer, is equally unnecessary.⁸⁹ Like the verse *Roman de Troie* (ll. 15270-4, l. 29643, l. 29656, l. 29769), which also mentions Hector's son in the prologue (l. 702), the prose *Troie* mentions a *Laudamanta* towards its

⁸⁶ For examples of the former, see British Library (hereafter BL) MS Stowe 54 and Paris, BnF, MS f. fr. 301; BnF, MSS f. fr. 254, 785, 1627, Cambridge, Trinity College, MS 0. 4. 26 and BL, MS Add. 9785 have section markers, in accordance with the rest of the prose *Troie* in these manuscripts; in BnF, MS. f. fr. 1631 and Anc. 7630 (5), the *Landomata* story is marked by an initial, in accordance with the rest of the text.

⁸⁷ Miranda Griffin, *The Object and the Cause in the Vulgate Cycle* (London: Legenda, 2005), p. 5.

⁸⁸ Williams, p. 144.

⁸⁹ Jung, p. 441; *Roman de Troie*, ed. by Constans, VI (1912), p. 311; Meyer, p. 67.

end; if that text was being copied, it seems possible that a scribe penned a short, three-folio continuation.⁹⁰ In any case, the *Roman de Landomata* was transmitted in twenty manuscripts with the *première mise en prose du Troie*, and once with a verse *Roman de Troie*. The prose *Troie* does occur without it in the *deuxième mise en prose du Roman de Troie*, a development which survives in three manuscripts.⁹¹

Egidio Gorra usefully places the *Roman de Landomata* with other texts that show a history of rewriting verse Troy material in prose in Italy.⁹² Other adaptations of this material, such as *La Vendetta dei discendenti di Ettore*, have strong connections with material from the Vulgate Cycle.⁹³ Despite its very different scale, the Vulgate is a suggestive early thirteenth-century intertext for the *Roman de Troie* and the *Roman de Landomata*; Trojan and Grail narratives are indeed assembled together in the 1340s *Perceforest* as well as in Cod. Bodmer 147, in which Merlin retells the prose *Troie*.⁹⁴

The *Roman de Landomata* tells the story of Hector's son Landomata, who is raised away from Troy but goes there on coming of age. On the way, he takes revenge on Antenor's son Drual, Calchas and Menelaus, and gains the lands of the latter two. When he arrives at Troy, he refuses to rebuild the city, but proposes to

⁹⁰ In Constans and Faral's base text, BnF, MS f. fr. 1612, in which the *Landomata* is present, Hector's child is mentioned at fols 59rab, 59va; he is named at fol. 135vb.

⁹¹ Figures from Cross, p. 24 and <http://www.arlima.net/no/380>, ed. by Anne Rochebouet. Chesney, p. 51 notes the absence of the *Roman de Landomata* from MS Douce 196, part of what she terms a 'southern version'.

⁹² Gorra, pp. 203-64 (pp. 244-8 on the *Roman de Landomata*).

⁹³ See Gorra, pp. 248-64; see also Jane H. M. Taylor, 'Guerre et fin des temps: lecture intertextuelle de la Bataille du Franc-Palais dans le *Roman de Perceforest*', in *Guerres, voyages et quêtes au Moyen Age: Mélanges offerts à Jean-Claude Faucon*, ed. by Alain Labbé, Daniel Lacroix and Danielle Queruel (Paris: Champion, 2000), pp. 413-20 for a reading of the *Perceforest* as a response to the Vulgate Cycle.

⁹⁴ *Le Roman de Troie*, ed. by Vielliard, p. 7.

help the people build ‘villes, chastiaus et manoirs’ [towns, castles and manors] (p. 147, 140c) around the region. He marries the King of Coine’s daughter (now Konya in Turkey), before conquering ‘tout le païs qui entor lui estoit si come est Jorgie, Ermenie et Surie’ [all the land which was around him, Georgia, Armenia and Syria] (p. 147, 140d). He punishes the kings of Jorgie and Ermenie for their selfish kingship: the first abandons his peasants when Landomata attacks and the second refuses to share his wealth with his army. He finally conquers ‘tous li païs oriental’ [all the eastern lands] (p. 148, 141d). The epilogue claims that the text is a translation and that it brings the story of Troy to a close. This ending raises questions about how far the text’s narrative of migration and expansion is shaped in relation to this claim for translation, and what is at stake for this prose continuation in reimagining *translatio imperii* in such a way, before ending with an account of *translatio studii*.

Inheritance is the central theme of this narrative, which begins when Hector’s son Landomata goes to claim his lands as heir to the Trojans. He decides to try to regain his land and to punish those who have betrayed Troy. In order to do so, he must go to the places where those events happened: places which he has never visited but which he knows belonged to his lineage, and their contact zones. He retraces *translatio imperii* by going back to the land of Troy and reworks older stories as he takes revenges on the way. Troy provides a retroactive origin – both of glory and of a fallen city – for Landomata’s subsequent empire building, as he conquers the lands around it and in Africa before striking east to conquer the Orient. He successfully gains an empire far larger than ever before for the fallen Trojan lineage because the battles at Troy weakened the whole of Asia.

Landomata posits another model for *translatio*: the world might be in decline, but a past power may exceed its former glory. In drawing on the Trojans' long (if not stable) history, Landomata reinvents that people's history in retrospect.

In the epilogue to the *Roman de Landomata*, the writer notes this text's translated history and its connections with the longer Troy story.

Si vos ai ore menee a fin la veraie estoire de Troie selonc ce qu'elle fu trovee en l'almaire de Saint Pol de Corrinte en grijois langage, et dou grizois fu mise en latin et je la translatai en françois... (p. 148, 142a)
[I have now brought the true story of Troy to an end, in accordance with how it was found in the library of St Paul of Corinth in the Greek language, and how it was put into Latin from Greek. And I translated it into French...]

Though the writer positions the text here as providing the end of the 'veraie estoire de Troie', within this story of translation, the earliest transmission is occluded: neither a Trojan language nor location for the book is given. Although he later highlights the opposition between truthful prose and false verse, his account of production through translation bears a striking resemblance to Benoît's fictional history of the *Roman de Troie*, translated from Greek into Latin and then into French. The *Landomata* writer's audience perhaps at least initially might have known Benoît's text, as would the readers of BnF, MS. f. fr. 821, which contains both a verse *Roman de Troie* and a prose *Roman de Landomata*. The writer's inclusion of just such a history of transmission, possibly inspired by that of Benoît, might read as a deliberate nod to the fictive nature of this continuation, which is absent from some versions of the prose *Troie* and also from the verse *Roman de Troie*.

The writer thus obliquely aligns his textual production with the tradition which claims fictional transmission through translation. This trope is equally

present in vernacular verse texts and Latin prose texts.⁹⁵ David Hult notes of a similar rhetorical move in the *Second Continuation of the Perceval* that aligning prose with jongleurs' texts 'calls into question one of the most widespread commonplaces regarding the "emergence of prose"'.⁹⁶ The writer plays on audience awareness of a tradition in verse that does not include this continuation, which is not extant in an independent version. The *Roman de Landomata* writer finishes his tale by claiming that it enacts *translatio studii*, just like one of the verse narratives that he later disavows.

In fact, through this fictional history of transmission, he suggests his translation is a means of textual production distinct from Benoît's.

Je la translatai en françois et non pas par rime ne par vers, ou il covient par fine force avoir maintes menchoignes com font ces menestriez qui de lor langues font mainte fois rois et amis solacier de quoi il font sovent lor profit et autrui damage, mais par droit conte selonc ce que je la trovai sans riens covrir de verité ou de mençoinge demoustrer, en tel maniere que nus n'i poroit riens ajointre ne amermer que por vraie deüst estre tenue. (p. 148, 142a)

[I translated it into French, and not in rhyme or in lines, where it is fitting by absolute necessity to put in many lies, like these minstrels do who, with their tongues, entertain kings and friends very frequently, from which they are often at an advantage and do others down, but I narrate correctly, in accordance with how I found it, without covering up anything truthful or showing anything false, in such a way that no-one can add or remove anything that must be taken as true.]

'Par droit conte' [I narrate correctly] suggests that the writer refuses to digress.

This assertion quickly takes on moral connotations of fidelity to his elusive source, as he only tells the story 'selonc ce que je la trovai' [in accordance with how I found it]. Nevertheless, 'par droit conte' might well refer to the telling of the text in hand, which now replaces the putative sources like 'Daire' and 'Ditis'.

⁹⁵ Hult, 'Poetry', in *Poetry*, ed. by Dixon and Sinclair, p. 29.

⁹⁶ Hult, 'Poetry', in *Poetry*, ed. by Dixon and Sinclair, p. 29.

The choice of ‘trover’ furthermore suggests that this passage is an ironic comment on distinctions between fictional verse and factual prose. ‘Selonc ce que je la trovai’ bears a striking parallel to his ‘selonc ce qu’elle fu trovee en l’almaire’ of just a few lines earlier. *Trover* in both these examples carries its double meaning – noted in the Introduction – of *to create* or equally *to find*, for example in another text, and therefore to transcribe or to translate. This verb links the earlier act of finding a book and translating it from Greek into Latin and the writer-persona’s decision to render the Latin in French prose. It shows the double possibility of translation: the act of finding a source also means retroactively creating it. The writer’s presentation of his textual production through fictional translation mimics an earlier rhetorical move.

This ambiguity therefore opens up a new reading of a trope that is sometimes still read in terms of privileging prose’s capacity for truth over verse, which, for example, Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski links with ‘doubtful content’ in her discussion of the *Histoire Ancienne*.⁹⁷ If *trover* is regularly used to signify producing fiction, perhaps ‘verité’ might refer to the narrative coherence and completeness of this ‘conte’ itself, rather than to fidelity to an external source. Translation thus functions as a metaphor for creative textual production. The writer therefore suggests that the consequence of such a ‘droit conte’, where nothing truthful has been hidden, is that if anyone adds or removes anything, it cannot be taken as true. Such a reading is ironic: this passage ends the *Roman de Landomata*, which adds the history of the next generation to the prose *Troie* and which therefore draws upon another fiction.

⁹⁷ Blumenfeld-Kosinski, p. 46.

The writer's description of the minstrels compounds this irony: they entertain kings and friends 'de lor langues' [with their tongues]. Though 'lengues' could refer simply to their tongues, as they win favour through their speech and singing, it might also be interpreted as referring to languages, a usage which the *FEW* notes was current from the tenth century onwards.⁹⁸ If the minstrels that he criticises are multilingual, then they resemble his account of the genesis of his own text, through versions in Greek, Latin and now French.

The writer's presentation of his act of translation paradoxically aligns him with the minstrels who sing in verse, whom he seems to criticise. He thus restates the conditions of his written production whilst satirizing the association of prose with more serious registers.⁹⁹ This writer might see himself as a minstrel; David Hult notes the 'casual rapport (perhaps even identification)' between clerkly writers and 'the prosifiers who were beginning to make their appearance'.¹⁰⁰ 'Solacier' only has negative connotations if readers' emotional responses to texts are less valued than being taken seriously by other scholars. Here the minstrels' audience includes 'rois', so their influence is distinctive, but not necessarily less than that of an implied clerkly counterpart. The writer's real criticism is implied by the minstrels' concern for their own reputation at others' expense; he suggests that the production of prose and verse texts might nevertheless have similar origins.

⁹⁸ *FEW*, V (1950), pp. 361-5.

⁹⁹ For example, Serge Lusignan, *La Langue des Rois au Moyen Âge: le français en France et en Angleterre* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2004) discusses charters and legal documents from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, all of which are in prose.

¹⁰⁰ Hult, 'Poetry', in *Poetry*, ed. by Dixon and Sinclair, p. 29.

The *Landomata* writer claims to have finished the story of Troy. He states he has ‘menee a fin la veraie estoire de Troie [...] que nus n’i poroit riens ajointre ne amermer’ [brought the true story of Troy to an end [...] to which no-one can add or remove anything] (p. 148, 142a). But this story has already ended many times – in Dares, in Dictys, in the *Roman de Troie* and in the prose *Troie*. This text, which always follows another, rewrites the east-west trajectory of *translatio imperii*: Landomata returns to the fallen city – Troy – and thus must respond to the consequences of the events of the war, and to people that the narrative has long since left behind.

He therefore assumes the dual roles of heir and avenger, which will grow into those of law-giver and conqueror.

Quant Laudomatha se vit en pooir de son honor acroistre, si dist a son frere que volentiers iroit son païs veoir et les gens que demorés estoient de celle destruction et, se il i trovast acuns de ceaus qui son lignage et son païs avoient destruit, qu’il s’en vengeroit. Quar dit li estoit que il en i avoit encore aucune racine de ceaus qui la traïson avoient faite. (p. 146, 139b)

[When Landomata saw that he was able to increase his honour, he said to his brother that he would willingly go to see his land and the people who had been left from the destruction, and if he found any of those who had destroyed his lineage and his land, he would take revenge on them. For it was said to him that there was still some root of those who had committed the betrayal.]

Landomata’s dual purpose is to travel to see his land and people: by implication, he wants to rule over them and to wreak vengeance on those that betrayed the city. He is therefore placed immediately as traveller, ruler and avenger. He subsequently kills Drual, Antenor’s nephew, who is ruling Troy, ‘en venjance de la traïson de son oncle’ [in revenge for his uncle’s treason] (p. 146, 139d); he also travels to an ‘isle estrainge’ [unfamiliar island] (p. 146, 139d-140a) to find Calchas, and takes pity on him because of his age, so only

le fist enmurer en une petite torelle et la li fist doner pain et aigue ou il fina sa vie a grant doulor. (p. 146, 140a)

[had him walled up in a little tower and there had him given bread and water, where he finished his life in great pain.]

Finally, Landomata ‘ne se tient mie por [paiez se] il n’alast sus Menelaüs qui encore regnoit’ [he did not think that his account was at all settled if he did not go after Menelaus, who was still reigning] (p. 146, 140a). Menelaus flees, leaving Landomata to take over his land and receive homage from his barons. He then returns to Troy to discuss its future. This continuation constitutes another layer in the feuds between Greeks and Trojans, this time focused on those who have betrayed Troy in some way, including defectors and the leader of the Greek assault on Troy.

Landomata’s journey to Troy brings him into contact with figures who are principally known because of their past deeds, and upon whom he wants to take revenge. The progress of *translatio imperii* through time is therefore complex: Landomata’s actions highlight what Jacques Derrida has termed the ‘non-contemporanéité à soi du présent’.¹⁰¹ He restarts a story that has already been finished.

Such connections between the impulse to justice and temporal dislocation have been compellingly analysed by Derrida in relation to a rather better-known text, *Hamlet*. He argues that Hamlet ‘maudit d’abord et plutôt cet effet injuste du dérèglement, à savoir le sort qui l’aurait destiné, lui, Hamlet, à remettre sur ses gonds un temps démis – et à le remettre droit, à le remettre au droit’ (p. 45). Hamlet curses the fact that he must set time straight – and to turn it back to the law, that is, to right past wrongs now, in the present. In contrast to Hamlet,

¹⁰¹ Derrida, *Spectres de Marx: l’état de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle Internationale* (Paris: Galilée, 1993), p. 16. Further quotations are given in parentheses within the text by page number.

Landomata desires and pursues his destiny as avenger. He wants to travel to set right the wrongs done to his people. Like Landomata, Hamlet is ‘un redresseur de tort, celui qui ne peut venir, comme le droit, qu’après le crime, ou tout simplement, *après*: c’est-à-dire dans une génération nécessairement seconde, originairement, tardive et dès lors destinée à *hériter*’ (p. 46); unlike Hamlet, Landomata relishes this task. The previous generation of Trojan nobility has been all but wiped out, and the world’s leaders are weakened: Landomata inherits the stories of what took place at Troy, and his land is gained from punishing those he sees fit.

If Landomata is initially placed as avenger the second time he comes to Troy, after punishing its betrayers and Menelaus, he quickly transforms this role into the closely linked one of conqueror. The crux of this part of the narrative lies in his comment that ‘je sui celui qui ja mais ne veul qu’ele [Troy] soit par moi restouree toute ensemble’ [I am the one who never wants Troy to be restored entirely by myself] (p. 147, 140b). He refuses to rebuild Troy, but instead asks the Trojans to build ‘villes, chastiaus et manoirs’ [towns, castles and manors] (p. 147, 140c). The land of Troy is built upon once more, but no longer either named or organised as a city. The city of Troy remains an occluded origin for this newly disparate organization of the Trojans under Priam’s grandson’s rule.

Landomata is therefore placed as a good reader – and anti-king – of Troy’s history. He thinks ‘ele fu de male ore comencie que les dieus ne la [vuelent] en pais souffrir’ [it was began in an unlucky hour, so the gods do not want it to remain in peace] (p. 147, 140b). He acts accordingly, aware that he arrives after Troy ‘.II. fois fu destruite’ [was destroyed twice] (p. 147, 140b), and seeks to avoid this

pattern. Nevertheless, having begun to continue past stories that elsewhere appeared finished, Landomata keeps on doing so. He begins to remake Trojan power on a previously unimagined scale, even in a much weakened world.

Once the city is dispersed, its power lies with him as ‘li roi des Troiens’ [king of the Trojans] (p. 147, 140d), who is successful as the heir of that now much reduced kingdom. The previous strength of the city is transmitted to him through his bloodline: the king seems to represent the place metonymically. Although he refuses to restore the city, he finds another way to redress its fall. He conquers lands that Troy never had, creating a second wave of *translatio imperii* which emanates from Troy.

Si s’en ala en Surie et par de la en Egypte et gaaigna tout le païs jusques a desers de Nubie, et jusques a la mer d’Inde et que par amors que par force tous li païs oriental, mout poi s’en failli, mist sous sa seignorie. (p. 148, 141c-d)
[He went away to Syria, and from there, to Egypt, and won all the lands to the Nubian deserts, and to the Indian Sea and, by love or by force, he had all the oriental lands, of which he failed to gain very few, under his lordship.]

This list of conquered lands shows a journey that reverses *translatio imperii* geographically: Landomata moves the opposite way along the trade routes to the broad historical trajectory of the *Histoire Ancienne*, within which framework this text appears in at least 8 extant manuscripts.¹⁰² The king of the Trojans takes over all the lands that were powers before its own heyday to create a second *translatio imperii* that moves east from Troy. This conquering journey realigns Troy with Asia, even if its descendants have mostly settled in Europe.

Most significantly, this story highlights the ongoing consequences of the Trojan war. Though Landomata’s conquering march is described as ‘trionphant’

¹⁰² Cross, p. 10.

(p. 148, 141d) at one point, the overall tone is a lament that one man can conquer so many countries.

Celi fu mout grief chose a faire, quar il i avoit eü guerre ou tous les rois et les princes dou païs avoient esté mort, les roiaumes en estoient tous ensilliez et desrees, les quels Landomata remist tout a point et les ordena par bone seignorie a vivre selonc droit et lor dona nouvelle loi que il maintindrent puis grant tens après sa mort. (p. 148, 141d)

[This was a very grievous thing to do, for there had been a war where all the kings and princes of the land had been killed, on account of which the kingdoms were all exiled and disordered, which Landomata corrected and ordered them by good lordship to live according to right, and gave them a new law that they maintained a long time after his death.]

As in Otto of Freising's account of *translatio studii et imperii*, this world has been weakened by war. The losers' heir can then conquer most of their former allies without much ado or indeed triumph. The story emphasises the necessity of his conquests, by continuing his function as lawgiver and righter of wrongs:

Landomata fills a void rather than punishing bad kingship. The deflatory pathos of 'celi fu mout grief a faire' suggests that Landomata found conquering such desolate places, devoid of government and with many people in exile, morally difficult; the ease with which he conquers these places is bleak. As an exile himself, he draws on a retroactive image of a strong Trojan past to put historical order and retroactive continuity onto these Eastern lands. Though Troy has repeatedly fallen, it is presented as bearing the historical continuity that these other unnamed lands need.

Appropriately enough, given the translations, both temporal and geographical, that take place throughout this narrative, Landomata does not settle finally in Troy, but rather with his wife, the daughter of 'ses prochains voisins' [his close neighbour] (p. 147, 140c). He ensures the land will pass to his sons and daughters, but nevertheless, the patrilinear succession of the Trojans has been

broken. As in every other continuation, the Trojans move elsewhere, and Troy's power is displaced. Landomata's brother, who remains at home, offers an alternative possibility of stasis for the Trojan descendants, whereas Landomata decides to migrate, conquer and settle new lands after the Trojan War. The text's fictional transmission history does not produce images of linguistic translation within the narrative, but rather, at this moment in the tradition, this writer is particularly concerned to show Landomata's physical movement from Italy to Troy, which reverses *translatio imperii*; in this way, the fictional linguistic heritage of the text reinscribes Landomata as a Trojan (rather than an Italian), as it begins in Greek, paralleling Benoît's fictional textual transmission for the *Roman de Troie*.

His role is thus a melancholic one. Landomata knows he has come too late and therefore tries to recreate a past heyday. This position of the next generation is astute in the wider context of this continuation, which revisits that old ground rather than moving elsewhere. A sense of loss that can never be regained pervades the narrative that is perhaps realised in relation to language through its fiction of translation. I would further suggest that Landomata's sense of lateness is equally pertinent to the text's prose form, so deliberately placed against verse. Its persistent presentation of its production through translation mimics an already fictional history of displacement, that of Benoît de Sainte-Maure. The prose *Troie* inherits verse's sense of already coming afterwards: what is more, this writer knows he is by no means the first to realise this status.

The *Roman de Landomata* finishes with an account of its textual production through translation, which occludes its own Trojan origins and

satirises the oft-repeated distinction between truthful prose and false verse. This epilogue therefore offers suggestive ways to reflect on the narrative, in which the present heir takes up past stories by punishing figures from an earlier generation for their deeds. Reopening past stories thus requires travel to the places associated with them, which takes Landomata back to Troy. He is a sufficiently reflective reader of history to refuse to rebuild the city, instead creating a second wave of *translatio imperii* that creates a Trojan empire – reversing its usual direction – by conquering North Africa and Asia.

Conclusion

The prose adaptations of the verse *Roman de Troie* primarily show translation as a form of secondary production, but these writers conceptualise their textual production in connected yet distinct ways. In the *Historia Destructionis Troiae*, making pagan idols has ambiguous consequences for the ethical position of translation. Just as Guido sets his idols in dialogue with Christian and Jewish creation stories, this metaphor highlights a further priority of these prose narratives in representing translation: many of these adaptations relate Troy specifically to the wider geography of Western Europe, whereas in Benoît de Sainte-Maure's narrative, Troy is positioned implicitly through the trade of material goods – in particular, textiles – with an exotic and even fantastical Orient. Thus the prose *Troie* offers detail upon the trade routes that make Troy a great power, and along which power would seem to travel temporally in the narrative of *translatio imperii*, as the overarching framework of the *Histoire Ancienne* would suggest, though not by any means invariably or irreversibly.

Indeed, the texts highlight the linguistic and cultural overlaps that such a diachronic narrative can obscure. These networks of geographical *translatio* co-exist with a fluid, and frequently dislocated, sense of time. The continuation of the prose *Troie*, the *Roman de Landomata*, demonstrates that translation frequently creates just such temporal dislocation: Landomata reopens past stories, and in doing so, he reinvents any previous notion of Trojan power as he conquers most of Europe and the Orient.

This chapter has examined how the prose adaptations of the *Roman de Troie* present translation; they continue to be adapted and circulated, with the *cinquième mise en prose du Roman de Troie* perhaps being composed as late as 1380. The subsequent chapter furthers this discussion by examining how translation is presented by two near-contemporary writers working at the end of the fourteenth century, John Gower and Christine de Pizan. Neither writes a complete prose version of the Troy story, but rather both focus on narrating particular episodes from those myths, and making new connections between these myths and the present. Because of this difference in approach to textual production, they conceive of it in ways distinct from the other writers considered in this thesis. The structures of translation remain important in their presentation of their creative process but these ideas are no longer explicit; instead, Christine and Gower envisage their textual production in terms of following examples and resemblance. Both Gower and Christine create networks of geographical *translatio* that disrupt established linear narratives. For instance, the mythical figure Carmentis creates the Roman alphabet and recognises the site of Rome long

before the Trojans ever do. She thus highlights these writers' continuing concern to create and to narrate spaces and times for fictions of translation.

3. Translation, Multilingualism and Making Fiction in John

Gower and Christine de Pizan

Neither John Gower nor Christine de Pizan tells long stories about Troy, nor does either claim to translate their material. But both take the Troy matter as a starting point upon which they model their own invention. In her *Epistre Othea* (c. 1400), Christine de Pizan presents a poem which she claims may have been written by a goddess, Othea, and if not, that it is a plausible representation of such a text, had it existed:¹

A rimoier et dire me vueil prendre
Un epistre qui a Hector de Troye
Fu envoyé, si com l'istoire ottroye;
Se tel ne fu, bien pot estre semblable. (Prologue, ll. 54-7)
[I want to put myself to telling and rhyming a letter which was sent to Hector of Troy, as the history guarantees is true; if such a letter didn't exist, this one could well be similar.]

By raising the possibility that she has not only retold the letter in rhyme but has created it in the image of something that may never have existed, Christine claims the letter as her own plausible fiction while setting it within the mythical Trojan context. In suggesting resemblance, she retroactively creates both the goddess and the letter.² Christine thus places herself as the goddess's exegete. 'Se tel ne fu' suggests that history might not guarantee this letter at all; she thus acknowledges the inventive possibilities offered by the well-known set of Troy stories.

'Semblable' does not refer to a putative lost source but indexes the text's

¹ Christine de Pizan, *Epistre Othea*, ed. by Gabriella Parussa (Geneva: Droz, 1999). Further references to this edition are given in parentheses within the text by paragraph and line number. See Adrian Armstrong and Sarah Kay, *Knowing Poetry: Verse in Medieval France from the Rose to the Rhétoriqueurs* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), p. 180 for commentary on the interplay between prose and poetry in the *Epistre Othea*.

² Parussa, p. 384, n. 1a; see p. 20, n. 37 for a summary of posited explanations for Othea's name.

consonance with readerly expectations, based on the existing corpus of Troy stories. Christine explicitly suggests that rhyming and retelling are forms of textual production, and does so implicitly for translation: if this letter had existed, and this poem were therefore a translation of it, which language would a goddess use? This question is a microcosm of the principal enquiry pursued in this chapter, which aims to establish the extent to which translation influences Gower and Christine de Pizan's particular labour in creating these texts.

In order to do so, this chapter is structured in four parts. By means of introduction, I first introduce the two writers and offer a historical and disciplinary rationale for bringing them together in analysis, which enables me to outline and contextualise their approaches to the Troy story, observing how the aesthetics of their texts differ from the writers considered elsewhere in this thesis: I briefly suggest their concepts of textual production might best be understood through the notion of the example. The second section delineates their concepts of textual production in more detail, by examining the significance of 'semblable' in Christine's *Epistre Othea* more closely, and placing it alongside 'semblance'; this discussion enables me to establish how the two writers rethink textual production, by comparing Christine's idea of 'semblance' with John Gower's presentation of creation *ex nihilo* in his *Mirour de l'Omme*.³ Such a contrast enables me to focus on the concept of the example, which I suggest is central to both Gower's and Christine's understandings of their textual production, and which, I propose,

³ *Mirour de l'Omme* in John Gower, *The Complete Works of John Gower*, ed. by G. C. Macaulay, 4 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899-1902), I (1899), pp. 1-334. All references to this edition given in parentheses within the text, for this text by line number, and for the *Confessio Amantis* and *Vox Clamantis*, by book number and line number.

might be read as offering a structure parallel to translation. I further examine the eponymous metaphor from Gower's *Mirour de l'Omme*, and suggest that it arises from a collapsing of time and space in a fantasy *translatio*. In order to examine how Gower and Christine conceive of their own textual production by rethinking *translatio studii et imperii*, the third part of the chapter considers one important example from the past that Christine evokes in her *Cité des dames* and Gower uses in his *Vox Clamantis*: the city of Troy.⁴ In his *Confessio Amantis*, Gower is equally concerned with Britain's Trojan heritage. This discussion leads me to ask why these two writers might deploy the Trojan story in such a way distinct from the other writers considered in this thesis, and how their uses of this ancient myth shape their presentations of the relations between their own vernaculars and Latin learning. The final section provides analysis of their respective accounts of the mythical, multilingual inventor of Latin – who prophesies the Trojans' arrival at Rome – to propose that the structures of translation might be read as underpinning these two writers' concepts of fiction.

Christine de Pizan is multilingual, but only writes in, and translates into, French, at the royal court, with extensive networks of wealthy patrons. Her preference for one language is perhaps characteristic of medieval writers during this period; John Gower's trilingual corpus therefore offers a useful contrast for considering translation; his trilingual output may stem from the specifics of his

⁴ *Vox Clamantis*, ed. by Macaulay, IV (1902), pp. 1-313; *Confessio Amantis*, ed. by Macaulay, II and III (1901); Christine de Pizan, *La Città delle Dame*, ed. by Earl Jeffrey Richards, trans. by Patrizia Caraffi (Milan: Luni Editrice, 1997). All references to this edition given in parentheses within the text by page number.

London context.⁵ His corpus is of particular significance for anyone writing on medieval translation, especially in relation to multilingualism. His three principal works, *Le Mirour de l'omme*, *Vox Clamantis* and *Confessio Amantis*, are written in French, Latin and English respectively. His work shows sustained thought across written languages, with particular examples of autotranslation and autoadaptation.⁶ His perspective is therefore an invaluable fourteenth-century one on the history, philology and networks of the languages in which he writes. He does not mark a particular preference for any one language, even if his critics have: his *Confessio Amantis* has received far more attention as part of an incipient English canon than either of his other works.⁷ Nonetheless, Gower's writing merits a place in other contexts than his English one; Ian Short sees him as the 'exemplification of [plurilingual England's] literary maturity', but also notes that this picture may be 'more synthetic than real', as his French was 'more Continental than Insular', showing a 'new order of French influences on Insular society'.⁸

⁵ On Gower's context, see, for example, Craig E. Bertolet, *Chaucer, Gower, Hoccleve and the Commercial Practices of Late Fourteenth-Century London* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 1-14; Tim William Machan, 'Medieval Multilingualism and Gower's Literary Practice', *Studies in Philology*, 103 (2006), 1-25 (pp. 6-7) offers a good summary of judgements on Gower's linguistic abilities to date and identifies clearly the issues for Gower writing in Latin and French, pp. 9-13.

⁶ See Machan, 'Multilingualism', pp. 15-21 for commentary on Gower's autotranslation.

⁷ R. F. Yeager, 'John Gower's Audience: The Ballades', *The Chaucer Review*, 40 (2005), 81-105 (p. 81) offers a justification of the neglect of Gower's French work; Ardis Butterfield, 'Articulating the Author: Gower and the French Vernacular Codex', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 33 (2003), 80-96, her *The Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language and Nation in the Hundred Years' War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 244-64 and Jane Gilbert, 'Men Behaving Badly' show diverse ways of approaching Gower's work with a renewed focus on his French influences.

⁸ Ian Short, 'Patrons and Polyglots: French Literature in Twelfth-Century England', in *Anglo-Norman Studies XIV: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1991*, ed. by Marjorie Chibnall (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992), pp. 229-49 (p. 249).

Both Gower and Christine wrote for and about Richard II and Henry IV, but their work is rarely considered together.⁹ Both these kings took Christine's son into their households in an attempt to compel her to their courts, as she narrates in her *Advison*: Paul Strohm sees this anecdote as demonstrating Henry's desire for the 'adherence of established figures, for the celebration of poets'.¹⁰ Gower alters the dedication of his *Confessio Amantis* from Richard to England, i.e. for Henry (Prologue, ll. 22-5). The evidence of these passages indicates that the two writers did at least share two kingly readers, who were influential enough to have inspired a circle who read both writers.

When placed together, Christine and Gower's premises for producing their texts suggest that they approach the Trojan heritage in a new way. Neither opens any of their texts, regardless of language, with a claim that this is a copy of a book first produced at Troy, as Benoît de Sainte-Maure, some of the prose *Roman de Troie* writers or Guido delle Colonne do, and thus their textual production is no longer presented as the result of a direct line of transmission from Troy, established through the fiction of translation. Although they both handle the Trojan material, they break it down into smaller episodes, comment on the morality of those stories and, most importantly here, subordinate them to a frame

⁹ The only critic I am aware of who has compared Gower with Christine is Butterfield, *Familiar Enemy*, pp. 348-9.

¹⁰ Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre de l'advison Christine*, ed. by Christine Reno and Liliane Dulac (Paris: Champion, 2001), 3, XI; Paul Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow: The Social Imagination of Fourteenth-Century Texts* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 92; pp. 89-92 on Gower and Christine.

narrative that is not one of fictional textual transmission.¹¹ For example, in her *Cité des dames*, Christine offers a series of female inventors and prophets, including Probe, Sappho, Medea, Circe, Minerva, Ceres and Isis, who offer ‘lessons in moral and spiritual behaviour’ for both the sexes.¹² Within this sequence, Christine introduces three figures connected with Troy stories: Medea, who helps Jason to win the Golden Fleece at Colchis after he has been refused hospitality by the Trojans, the first cause of the Trojan War, according to Benoît; Circe, who entraps Ulysses on his way home from Troy; and Carmentis, who prophesies the Trojans’ arrival at Rome. The Trojan narrative is fragmented and placed alongside tales from Ovid and the Bible. The reason why neither Christine nor Gower uses the trope of translating books from Troy might be because it does not fit with the particular shape of their texts, which function principally through the compilation of examples.

The aesthetic aspect of exemplarity that is most relevant here lies in its etymology: *exemplum*, from *eximo*, means first ‘a sample’, second, ‘an imitation, image, portrait’, and third, ‘a sample for imitation, instruction, proof, a pattern, model, original, example, precedent, case (the predominant meaning of the

¹¹ Analyses of Gower’s and Christine’s moral stances are an important part of scholarship on both these writers: see, for example, John H. Fisher, *John Gower: Moral Philosopher and Friend of Chaucer* (London: Methuen, 1965); many of the essays in *John Gower, Trilingual Poet: Language, Translation and Tradition*, ed. by Elisabeth Dutton with John Hines and R. F. Yeager (Cambridge: Brewer, 2010) and in *Healing the Body Politic: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Karen Green and Constant J. Mews (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005); Roberta Krueger, ‘Christine’s Anxious Lessons: Gender, Morality and the Social Order from the *Enseignemens* to the *Avision*’, in *Christine de Pizan and the Categories of Difference*, ed. by Marilyn Desmond (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), pp. 16-40.

¹² Rosalind Brown-Grant, ‘Christine de Pizan as a Defender of Women’, in *Christine de Pizan: A Casebook*, ed. by Barbara K. Altmann and Deborah L. McGrady (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 81-100 (p. 86).

word)'.¹³ The second and third meanings suggest that *exempla* might be understood in a way connected with the processes of translation. In her *Cité des dames*, Christine creates a city modelled on Jerusalem, in a reimagining of *translatio imperii et studii* that takes its cue from Augustine. She probably read this text in Raoul de Presles's French translation and commentary, several copies of which were produced in the same workshop as some of hers; de Presles was at Charles V's court.¹⁴ In the opening epigraph to his *Confessio Amantis*, Gower thinks seriously about *translatio imperii et studii*, as discussed later in this chapter; both writers note that they are patterning their work on earlier models, but without stating that they are translating. The aesthetic of the copy informs both exemplary narratives and narratives that claim to be translation: like much medieval narrative, both Gower and Christine seek to imitate earlier models. However, the first meaning of *exemplum*, 'a sample', is particularly significant for Gower and Christine's narrative structures: their emphasis on selection is clear, because both writers show that they have drawn the stories together. The principle of selection is essential to that of exemplarity, because it highlights both the writers' control over their material and their fictional personae within the text.

Christine and Gower wrote when the prose *Roman de Troie* and the *Histoire Ancienne* were still circulating widely and being translated into other languages. At the end of the prose *Roman de Troie* and its Latin translation, Guido

¹³ Lewis and Short, p. 682, cols. 2-3.

¹⁴ Raoul de Presles, *Livre de la cité de Dieu*, unedited; BnF, MS f. fr. 22912-3, available online at gallica.bnf.fr. Charity Cannon Willard, 'Raoul de Presles's Translation of Saint Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*', in *Medieval Translators and their Craft*, ed. by Jeanette Beer (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1989), pp. 329-46 (p. 342); Serge Lusignan, 'Written French and Latin at the End of the Middle Ages', in *Translation Theory and Practice in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Jeanette Beer (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997), pp. 185-98 (p. 185).

delle Colonne's *Historia Destructionis Troiae*, the narrative already shows potential for treatment as a series of episodes, particularly at its end, when it follows Ulysses, Agamemnon and the rest of the Greeks on their different ways home.

Nonetheless, Troy remains a significant place of cultural and imperial origins within these story collections: in the *Vox Clamantis* and the *Confessio Amantis*, Gower compares contemporary London with Troy and places England mythologically as Brut's Isle; in the *Cité des Dames*, one of the goddesses exhorts Christine to create a literary city, which – like Augustine's *City of God* – will finally surpass Troy, and her *Epistre Othea* is a letter of advice from a fictional goddess to Hector.¹⁵ Carmentis, the inventor of the Latin alphabet, anticipates the Trojans' arrival at and foundation of Rome.

Concepts of Textual Production

Christine de Pizan returns to the *semblable* once more in the *Epistre Othea*; this usage further complicates her presentation of textual production. This time, the fictions are those of Circe, who precedes Carmentis in the *Cité des Dames*; Christine shows Circe using her learning for immoral ends. She is an 'enchantresse et trop sot de sors et d'envoulemens' (para. 98, ll. 8-9), who turns warriors into 'porcs'. Christine allegorises:

Le port Circés pouons entendre pour ypocrisie que le bon esperit doit eschever
sur toute riens. (para. 98, ll. 31-2)

¹⁵ On Christine's usage of Augustine's *City of God*, see Xiangyun Zhang, 'L'idée de "deux cités": l'influence de Saint Augustin sur Christine de Pizan', *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes*, 11 (2004), 121-32 (esp. paras 8-11 on the *Cité des dames*; online edition at <http://crm.revues.org/2082>, last consulted 22nd September 2013).

[We can understand Circe's harbour as hypocrisy, which the good spirit must eschew above all.]

Christine elucidates this suggestion through two quotations.¹⁶

Et contre les ypocrites parle saint Gregoire es Morales que la vie des ypocrites n'est mais que une vision fantastique et une fantasie ymaginaire, qui monstre par dehors en semblance d'ymage ce qui n'est mie dedens en reale verité. A ce propos dit nostre Seigneur en l'Euvangile: 'Ve vobis ypocrite, qui similes estis sepulchris dealbatis que a foris apparent hominibus speciosa, intus vero plena sunt ossibus mortuorum.' Mathey .xxij. capitulo. (98, ll. 32-41)

[And St Gregory speaks against hypocrites in his *Moralia*, saying that the hypocrites' life is nothing but a fantastic vision and an imaginary fantasy, which shows outside, in the resemblance of an image, that which is not at all inside in real truth. On this subject, our Lord says in the New Testament: 'Woe unto you [...] hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones.' (Matthew 23:27)]

Her vision of hypocrisy draws on her understanding of Othea's poem: hypocrites'

lives resemble an absent referent, and therefore call it into being. Lacan's

quotation of the story of Zeuxis and Parrhasios suggests why Circe's island,

allegorised as the life of the hypocrite or a 'vision fantastique et [...] fantasie

ymaginaire' by Christine, is so captivating. Zeuxis paints such realistic grapes that

the birds are attracted to them, but Parrhasios paints a veil, so that other people

ask him what it hides: it stimulates the human desire to see the perfect, impossible

Real behind the image.¹⁷ Christine presents hypocrisy as a mode of perception.

The change in language for the biblical quotation closes off the chapter, as occurs

throughout the *Epistre Othea*. The image of the *whited* sepulchre highlights the art

object's ability to create an illusion or *trompe-l'oeil*: a tomb only contains dead

men's bones. Christine presents her text as fiction, while further probing the moral

ambiguity of her central term for textual production, 'semblable'.

¹⁶ St Gregory, *Morales sur Job: troisième partie (Livres XI-XVI)*, ed. and trans. by Aristide Bocognano, *Sources Chrétiennes* 221 (Paris: Cerf, 1975), XV, VI: 7, pp. 18-20; Matthew 23:27.

¹⁷ Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire Livre XI: Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse* (Paris: Seuil, 1964), p. 102.

She is not isolated in such re-examination of the creative process. Roughly twenty years earlier, in Gower's earliest work, *Mirour de l'Omme* (c. 1370s), he conceptualises fiction by negating the tropes of translation and example, something he never repeats. What remains of this prologue (the first forty-seven stanzas of which are lost) looks quite different to his later presentations of textual production through copying and *exempla*.

Ce n'est pas chose controuvée
Dont pense affaire ma ditée (ll. 13-14)
[It isn't an imitated thing that I think to make my poem from]

Cerquiglini-Toulet observes the negative connotations that 'controvers' gains during this period, which 'porte plus nettement cette marque diabolique': it 's'inscrit toujours *contre*, c'est-à-dire en regard d'un modèle, l'ultime modèle étant celui de la création divine'.¹⁸ Nonetheless, this example remains striking in its approach to textual production, which appears to reject the concepts of translation and example as its cornerstones, in favour of one of novelty, supported by a quotation from St Gregory.

Pour ce, si bon vous sembleroit,
Un poy du nient je vuill conter;
Dont quant l'en quide avoir plenier
La main, tout vuide passer doit.
Tout estoit nient, quanq'om ore tient,
Et tout ce nient en nient revient
Par nient, qui tout fait anientir. (ll. 33-9)
[Because, if it seems good to you, I want to tell a little of nothing, of which when one thinks one's hand is full, it becomes completely empty. Everything was nothing, that man has now, and all this nothing comes back to nothing, by nothing, which reduces everything to nothing.]

Gower offers a rationale that worldly life will all come to nothing 'come songe' [like a dream] (l. 28), as will 'l'amour seculer' [worldly love] (l. 31). His handful

¹⁸ Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet, *La Couleur de la mélancolie: la fréquentation des livres au XIV^e siècle: 1300-1415* (Paris: Hatier, 1993), p. 107.

of nothing is perhaps a corporeal analogy for Lacan's pot, the first putative artefact: the movement of cupping the hand allows Gower to conceive of the void.¹⁹ Gower conceives writing through creation *ex nihilo*. In making the gesture, or later the artifact, the image of nothing is created. His punning thus highlights the creativity that can come out of nothingness: he also notes that 'tantz mals' [so many evils] (l. 43) come from the devil, as people renounce their gods 'pour nient' [for nothing] (l. 47) or for false, temporal ones.

Both Christine's and Gower's thought on illusion and creation grows from the work of Gregory the Great. Gower cites 'saint Gregoire' (l. 54), who notes:

Nient en soy comprend
 Le noun du pecché soulement
 Car pecché tous biens anientist. (ll. 58-60)
 [Nothing in itself comprises the name of sin alone, because sin reduces all good to nothing.]

The power of nothing to destroy – and to assume an implicit representative value, for example, the name of sin – has consequences for Gower's fiction. Although the first forty-seven stanzas of this text are missing, after this prologue, he sets out his genealogy of sins, to be later complemented by that of the virtues. Christine's and Gower's prologues are unusual in their focus on their works' *sui generis* nature, and show their authors profoundly rethinking how to represent their own textual production. This departure is particularly notable in the *Epistre Othea*, clearly inspired by texts about Troy: Christine presents her fiction as inspired by those stories, rather than as one that has been transmitted from that past.

However, the principal means by which Christine and Gower conceive of their textual production is as a process of following – and reinventing – examples.

¹⁹ *Le Séminaire Livre VII*, pp. 144-6.

In Book One of his *Confessio Amantis*, Gower states that his purpose in producing his text is to offer moral examples. He states he

Woll wryte and schewe al openly
How love and I togedre mette
Wherof the world ensample fette
Mai after this, whan I am go,
Of thilke unsely jolif wo. (I, ll. 84-8)

Similarly, in her *Cité des dames*, the narrator Christine laments not having read a single ‘volume moral’ [moral tome] (p. 42) which does not lambast women; in response to her plight, the goddess Dame Raison later offers ‘exemple de plusieurs grans maistresses qui ont esté les temps passez’ [examples of several great mistresses (of land and government) who lived in past times] (p. 94). In order to create these funds of examples, both writers select tales from other narratives, usually from classical or biblical sources, and compile them by means of a frame narrative, whether a letter of advice or the construction of a city (Christine) or a lover’s confession or a dream vision (Gower). These tales are frequently bookended with an explicit moral lesson.

Gower opens both his *Confessio Amantis* and his *Vox Clamantis* by presenting a perspective on textual production that works primarily through the example, unlike his *Mirour de l’Omme*. He suggests that writing and reading older texts – and therefore, by implication, reading and perhaps creating translations – are important because these processes shape understanding of the past. He reflects on this at length in his English-language *Confessio Amantis*.

Forthi good is that we also
 In oure tyme among ous hiere
 Do wryte of newe som matiere,
 Essampled of these olde wyse
 So that it myhte in such a wyse,
 Whan we ben dede and elleswhere,
 Beleve to the worldes eere
 In tyme comende after this. (Prologue, ll. 4-11)

Older writings, presumably in another language, such as Latin or French, provide the ‘ensample’ (I, l. 86): he opens both versions of the *Confessio* by demonstrating writing’s capacity to create authority, both moral and stylistic. Gower uses ‘essample’ as a verb here, which is unrecorded in the *MED*. This usage may indicate his particular sense of taking an example from the past as an active process. Writers can follow the example, or that which has been taken out or extracted (from the Latin verb *eximo*). This etymology also suggests that they may select their own preferred precedents, in order to shape their presentation of the past. They may imitate ‘the olde wyse’, older writers, in order to write about something new in a form that is successful enough to leave a legacy to future listeners worldwide.

One important way of marking ‘tyme’ is linguistic change. As Dante notes:

per eandem gentem sermo variatur [...] successive per tempora [...] Hinc moti sunt inventores gramatice facultatis: que quidem gramatica nichil aliud est quam quedam inalterabilis locutionis ydemptatis diversibus temporibus atque locis.²⁰
 [The speech of a given people changes [...] with the passing of time [...] This was the point from which the inventors of the art of grammar began; for their *gramatica* is nothing less than a certain immutable identity of language in different times and places.]

Past writers provide wise models for writing works that last, but present writers should handle ‘newe some matiere’ or new subjects. This diachronic process of

²⁰ Dante, *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, ed. and trans. by Steven Botterill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), I: IX, paras. 10-11.

reading, selection and writing implicitly includes that of translation. Current writers' work should be both 'newe' and 'essampled': their subjects, and style, are extracted from older writers but yet happen 'in oure tyme'. For Gower, present writers – and, crucially, their time – draw their prestige from their ability to write of new matter in ways they model on past authors, and this process necessarily entails translation. In his third recension of the *Confessio Amantis*, he extends this perspective upon textual production to include the imitation of moral and historical examples. He contends that the king and the nation's reputation rest upon the books written at court:

If noman write hou that it stode,
The pris of hem that weren goode
Scholde, as who seith, a gret partie
Be lost: so for to magnifie
The worthi princes that tho were,
The bokes schewen hiere and there,
Wherof the world ensampled is (Prologue, ll. 41-7)

Writing makes, and can 'magnifie' the value of the age by good models of rhetorical style or of governance, for without it, memories are likely to be lost, as very nearly happens in the *Roman de Perceforest*, discussed in the next chapter. 'Magnifie' further suggests that writing can increase (or decrease) a prince's reputation.

Gower therefore takes up this task to write of new and old material. He proposes a book

after the world that whilom tok
Long tyme in olde daies passed (Prologue, ll. 54-5)

But it will

touche also
The world which neweth every dai. (ll. 58-9)

By writing stories from each of Ovid's ages, which shorten as they approach the present, he hopes that his book too will be 'wyse'.

Within the same prologue, Gower conceives of his own writing as a process of transfer into English words. In order to express this idea, he uses a word that occurs most frequently in French; this choice may indicate that he thinks about writing in a multilingual way.

And for that few men endite
In oure englissh, I thenke make
A bok for Engelondes sake,
The yer sextenthe of kyng Richard. (Prologue, ll. 22-5)

The *MED* first defines 'enditen' as 'to write' or 'to dictate', the second of which approaches the image of writing as a kind of secondary process that this word evokes etymologically. 'Enditen' suggests that writing is a process which transfers something pre-existing into words, or as is perhaps most likely, into verse. Contemporary usage indicates that Gower may mean versifying, reiterating his pledge to write 'anglica [...] metra' [English verse] (Prologue, d) in the epigraph. For comparison, Chaucer begins his *Boece* (1.m.1.5):

Muses of poetes enditen to me thynges to ben writen.²¹

He envisages the muses putting ideas into 'dyte' – words or poetry – which he then writes down. *Enditen* is particularly apt to describe this text's production because it is a translation: Chaucer puts words from one language into another. In both English and French, 'dyte' frequently signifies verses or a poem. In French, a *dit*, which does not include music, is opposed to a *chanson*, which does; one

²¹ Chaucer, 'Boece', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson and F. N. Robinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 395-469 (ll. 3-4).

example would be Christine's *dits*.²² In English, a 'dyte' signifies a poem or ballad (*MED*), for example, the 'litel pore dyte' of 'A Balade of Complaint', often attributed to Chaucer, and Henryson's 'cairfull dyte', his *Testament of Cresseid*.²³ Gower depicts English here as a language of secondary composition, possibly via dictation, and he might be presenting the poetic process as a kind of *traduction absolue* here, translation from a hypothetical perfect language, a concept I discuss in detail in the Introduction. Furthermore, because the exact cognate 'enditer' also occurs in contemporary French, this usage suggests that French is another possible written language of choice for Gower, and it certainly highlights its important part in forming English vocabulary (examples of 'enditer' date back to the eleventh-century *Vie de Saint Alexis* and Wace's *Roman de Rou* from the 1160s).²⁴ 'Endite' is a clue that Gower thinks and writes multilingually.

Furthermore, when he creates one of the exemplary metaphors central to his work, Gower reflects upon the processes of translation. His eponymous image for his French work, the *Mirour de l'Omme* or *Speculum Hominis*, demonstrates his awareness of the possibilities of creating the past anew, and thus shaping the present. He versifies an exemplary story from version H of the *Sept Sages de Rome*, a version which appeared in both French and Latin translation; it was one

²² e.g. her 'Dit de la Rose', 'Livre du dit de Poissy' and 'Dit de la Pastoure', in her *Oeuvres Poétiques*, ed. by Maurice Roy, 3 vols (Paris: SATF, 1886-93), II, pp. 29-48, pp. 159-222, pp. 223-94.

²³ 'A Balade of Complaint', in Chaucer, *Riverside Chaucer*, p. 660; Henryson, 'The Testament of Cresseid', in *The Poems of Robert Henryson*, ed. by Denton Fox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 111-31, l. 1.

²⁴ See Godefroy, III (1884), p. 131.

of two versions ‘particulièrement en vogue à la fin du Moyen Âge’.²⁵ This narrative forms part of a great tradition: Yasmina Foehr-Janssens notes that its antecedent, the *Livre de Sindibad*, ‘court, dès le X^e siècle, (*Sindban* syriaque, première version complète connue) ou même sans doute avant, à travers les littératures arabe, persane, grecque, syriaque, hébraïque, jusqu’en Espagne’.²⁶

Gower retells the episode thus:

Au Rome el grant paleis jadyz
 Fesoit Virgile a son avis
 Pluseurs ymages en estant,
 Et en chascune enmy le pis
 Ot noun du terre ou du paiis
 Escript, et puis fesoit avant
 Sur un chival d’arrein seant
 Un chevalier q’ert bel et grant,
 Si ot l’espeie ou main saisiz.
 Ly mestres qui ce fuist fesant
 Du grant science estoit sachant,
 Mais ore oietz par quel devis.
 Qant terre ascune ou regioun
 Pensoit de sa rebellioun
 Encontre Rome a resister,
 L’ymage q’en portoit le noun
 Escript, tantost a grant randoun
 Fist une clocke en halt sonner;
 Et maintenant le chivaler
 S’espeie commença branler
 Vers celle ymage qui le soun
 Ot fait; et ensi d’encombrer
 Leur Cité firont saulf garder
 Ly citezein tout enviroun. (ll. 14725-48)

²⁵ Yasmina Foehr-Janssens, *L’Autre Voie du Roman: Le ‘Dolopathos’ et la tradition du ‘Roman des Sept Sages’* (Paris: Champion, 1994), p. 25; pp. 472-3 notes the occurrences of this particular episode within the tradition. Gaston Paris, ‘Préface’, to *Deux Rédactions du Roman des Sept Sages de Rome* (Paris: SATF, 1876), pp. i-xliii (p. xxxi) notes that the Latin version is translated from the French.

²⁶ Foehr-Janssens, p. 18, n. 10.

[At Rome, in the great palace, a long time ago, Virgil made, from an idea he had, several images/statues in bronze, and on each, in the middle of the chest, he had the name of the land or of the country written, and then he made a knight, who was handsome and large, sitting on a tin horse before them; he had his sword brandished in his hand. The master who was making this knew a great deal of knowledge, but now hear in what way. When any land or region thought to resist Rome by rebelling, a bell above the image, that bore the land or region's name written on it, would sound loudly; and now the knight would begin to brandish his sword towards that image/statue that had made the sound; and so the citizens all around kept their city safe from nuisance.]

He presents a series of interacting statues, or automata, made by Virgil, who was renowned in this period for his writing and for his magical powers, and this passage makes suggestive connections between these two attributes. Virgil's 'ymages' permit the Romans to know of rebellions anywhere in their lands, without having to leave 'leur Cité', in an imaginary physical translation of knowledge. This metonym lies at the heart of Gower's vision: Rome is both the city and its empire. Such verbal collapsing of space is characteristic of Virgil's invention. The success of his automatic model rests upon the strength of the written word (highlighted through repeated enjambment), which is engraved upon the tin statues. The words denote geographical regions, and by extension, the statues do too.

The written word therefore enables Virgil to collapse space, by magic, in this image: the city and the empire are effectively – if momentarily – one, because events happening elsewhere are instantly represented at Rome. This magical power of instant reproduction is not far removed from that of prophecy, because it elides the time normally spent travelling and collapses the usual diachrony inherent within translation. Gower's emphasis on the written quality of the word on the tin statues indicates that it enjoys universal, or at least empire-wide, currency. As in the story of Carmentis, whom Christine credits with the gift of

prophecy, writing – combined here with plastic reproduction – is performative: it shapes the Romans' actions by signalling events to which they must respond. However, this depiction is highly selective: for example, it omits natural disasters or tribes declaring war on each other, both of which may have also provoked responses from Rome, as well as more general information on the province. The statue and the name are both arbitrary signs. This model creates the important events in the regions through physical translation, by causing the city of Rome to respond to these rebellions that are represented there straightaway.

By exegesis of this image of immediate physical translation, Gower creates his eponymous metaphor, which circulated in both French and Latin: *Mirour de l'Omme* or *Speculum Hominis*. He glosses this story as offering a moral example, and was probably inspired here by the variant of this tale that occurs in other versions of the the *Sept Sages de Rome*, in which Virgil creates a statue holding a mirror to reflect events in the provinces.²⁷ This combination suggests that Gower knew at least two versions of this story.

Ensi ly sages du science
 L'ymage de sa conscience
 Enmy son pis escrivera;
 Du quoy, qant pecché le commence
 Tempter, tantost du sapience
 La sainte clocke il sonnera,
 Sique Resoun soy guarnira
 Et des prieres s'armera,
 L'espeie ou main de penitence,
 Dont par vertu defendera
 Du pecché s'alme et guardera
 Par la divine providence. (ll. 14749-60)

²⁷ Paris, 'Préface', to *Deux Rédactions*, p. xxxvi.

[Thus the wise man will write the image of his conscience in the middle of his chest; by which, when sin starts to tempt him, just as soon he will sound the holy bell, so that Reason will furnish itself with weapons and arm itself with prayers, with the sword of penitence in its hand, by which it will defend and keep his soul from sin by divine providence.]

The written word delimits the ekphrastic statues' meaning. Virgil had the names of the Roman provinces written on the statues' chests, so that the knight represented Rome, able to subjugate them at once. Gower proposes that just as this power controls its provinces, so a wise man is dominated by Reason, who is always ready to attack sin in this psychomachia. With this metaphor of the body politic, Gower develops the image's functions: the provinces' names are replaced by the single 'ymage de sa conscience' [image of his conscience] (l. 14749), which introduces another layer of representation. Gower's historical fiction provides an example for the reader to imitate in the present.

Unfortunately, the immediacy of representation of events at Rome cannot be replicated. The metaphor of the 'ymage de sa conscience' indexes the arbitrariness of writing: Gower can only make an imitation of the wise man's conscience. These two concepts, the image and the mirror, are both important to Jacques Lacan's work; he traces the use of 'imago' in psychoanalysis to the 'terme antique d'*imago*', from which Gower's 'ymage' also ultimately derives.²⁸ Lewis and Short define it as 'an imitation, copy of a thing, an image, likeness (i.e. a picture, statue, mask, an apparition, ghost, phantom)' and as 'an image or likeness of a thing formed in the mind, a conception, thought, imagination, idea'.²⁹ This second idea resonates with Gower's 'ymage de la conscience': it is a

²⁸ Jacques Lacan, 'Le Stade du miroir comme formateur de la fonction du Je', in *Écrits* (Paris: Seuil, 1966), pp. 93-100 (p. 94).

²⁹ Lewis and Short, p. 888, cols. 1-3.

subjective, arbitrary likeness, which nonetheless remains effective in labelling the automata in order for those to function. Gower dehistoricises his highly visual model to redeploy it as an ekphrastic representation of the struggle for the soul. He thus develops this visual metaphor into that of the mirror, a reflective object.

Uns grans clers q'ot noun Dionis
 Reconte que par son avis
 L'alme est semblablez au mirour
 Que de nature en soy compris
 Reçoit ce q'est devant luy mis
 Et en semblance et en colour (ll. 14761-6)
 [A great clerk who was called Dionis retells that in his opinion, the soul resembles a mirror, that, by the nature which is comprised in it, soaks up that which is put before it, both in resemblance and in colour]

He attributes this comparison to pseudo-Dionysios the Areopagite, just at the moment where he thinks about understanding the self. In versions A, C, D, K and L of the *Sept Sages de Rome*, however, rather than creating statues, Virgil creates a figure holding a mirror which reflects the rebellious provinces.³⁰ This character is absent from Gower's scene, but he keeps the mirror from these versions and notes the long Christian heritage of this image. He suggests that this metaphor may only partly originate with pseudo-Dionysios, who 'reconte' [retells] this comparison. Indeed, using the mirror to conceive of subjectivity is essential to Lacan's mirror stage. He first suggests that this stage occurs when the child sees itself in the mirror but mistakes its image for itself.

Cette forme situe l'instance du *moi*, dès avant sa détermination sociale, dans une ligne de fiction, à jamais irréductible pour le seul individu, – ou plutôt, qui ne rejoindra qu'asymptotiquement le devenir du sujet.³¹

Even before the child enters into full social contact, the mirror image locates the child's self in a fictional structure which is always distinct from the subject. Such

³⁰ Foehr-Janssens, p. 472.

³¹ 'Le Stade du miroir', p. 94.

thought highlights the mirror's capacity to provide an important metaphor to understand self-perception, which may develop, alter and more or less resemble the notional subject, but which remains a fiction.

Gower notes the consequences of such a comparison:

Cil q'est de tous les mals auctour,
C'est ly malfié, ly tricheour,
Pardevant l'alme en tiel devis
Se transfigure nuyt et jour,
Dont il meulx quide en sa folour
L'alme en serra plus entrepris. (ll. 14767-72)
[He who is the author of all evils, the devil, the cheater, transforms himself day and night before the soul in such a way that he thinks better, in his madness, that the soul will be more travailled.]

'Auctour' indicates the devil's responsibility for evil as well as the capacity to write. In front of the soul, he or she 'se transfigure', from the Latin 'transfiguro', 'to change in shape' or 'transform' – or 'pretend to be' something else.³² This attempt at feigning or imitating another's behaviour underlines human capacity to shape the self; the devil may therefore attempt to trick the mirror, and thus the soul, which highlights humans' subjective understanding. This shift in metaphorical import highlights the capacity of the ekphrastic image to carry multiple meanings. From a condensed, interactive map of empire, the statues are allegorised as a single person. The dual meaning of 'ymage' further suggests that, for Gower, copying entails reconceptualising and even invention. Translation of the *Sept Sages de Rome* both provides Gower with his central metaphor in the *Mirour de l'Omme*, and the process offers a structural parallel to the imitation of examples that is central to his textual production; however, both he and Christine

³² Lewis and Short, p. 1890, cols. 1-2, 'pretend to be': esp. transfiguro with se.

present this connection in ways that are distinct from the writers considered elsewhere in this thesis.

Building New Troys

Unlike Benoît de Sainte-Maure, the *Roman de Troie* prosifiers and Guido delle Colonne, neither writer states that his or her text is a translation from a book originally written at Troy. The story's fame was assured throughout the French and medieval Latin traditions; these writers thus were all able to claim to translate stories about Troy that originated there. Christine and Gower are thus able to reference Troy in order to create their own fictions of contemporary or ideal cities modelled metaphorically upon it. In initially placing London or the *Cité des Dames* in metaphorical relation with Troy, they emphasise their own part in selecting material, rather than claiming to translate another text. Their present texts no longer form fictional histories of transmission that connect them to the ancient world, but rather, these two writers model their writings about the present upon that past, without seeking to establish – however playfully – their unbroken line of descent from it.

Gower invokes Troy's fall as a parallel for the events happening in the city where he lives, London, and thus collapses the time lapse of *translatio imperii*. In Book One of his *Vox Clamantis*, which John H. Fisher suggests was probably added in after the 1381 rising, Gower juxtaposes the fall of Troy with animal

imagery, drawing on the prophetic mode used by Geoffrey of Monmouth in his *Prophetiae Merlini*, to retell those events in London:³³

Tunc simul vnanimis lupus et canis vrsus in vrbe
Depredant, que suas constituere moras.
Ecce senem Calcas, cuius sapiencia maior
Omnibus est, nullum tunc sapuisse modum. (I, ll. 959-62)
[Then at the same time, the wolf, the dog, and the bear pillaged together in the city and halted there. Behold, even the old man Calchas, whose wisdom was greater than everyone's, then knew no course of action.]³⁴

He uses Trojan metaphors to refer to the city garrison, who are defending New Troy; the peasants are not Greeks, but animals. The Greeks are only invoked as heroic figures similar to the Trojans, of whom there are none to quash the rebellion. At the end of Chapter Thirteen, Gower combines the two conceits with a metaphor and a simile:

Subdita Troiana cecidit victoria victa,
Troiaque preda fero fit velut agna lupo.
Rusticus agreditur, miles nec in vrbe resistit,
Hectore Troia caret, Argos Achille suo. (I, ll. 989-92)
[The Trojan victory was lost in defeat, and Troy became a prey to the wild beast, just like a lamb to the wolf. The peasant attacked and the knight in the city did not resist; Troy was without a Hector, Argos without its Achilles. (pp. 71-2)]

Placing these images together creates a newly degenerate fall of Troy. The salient point of comparison is that London lacks Troy's heroes when it is similarly under attack; in combining the Trojan metaphor with one of attacking animals, Gower highlights London's lack of defence against the rebels, and the later descent into disorder.³⁵ Despite this metaphor, Gower does not imply that the peasants were any weaker than the garrison. Malte Urban emphasises that 'even compared to

³³ Fisher, p. 103.

³⁴ Translations taken from John Gower, *The Major Latin Works of John Gower: The Voice of One Crying and The Tripartite Chronicle*, ed. and trans. by Eric W. Stockton (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962), p. 71. Further references are given in parentheses within the text by page number.

³⁵ For a brief explanation of why this was so, see Maurice H. Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1975), p. 268.

Trojans of little merit [Gower's] contemporary London fails', and thus he suggests that Gower's London is a 'lesser image of Troy'.³⁶ Urban rightly highlights the satirical side of the comparison, which demonstrates Gower's sense of a declining world.

However, Gower's parallel does invest London with great historical predecessors. The city did survive these events (of a few days rather than of nine years), which underscores the bathos of the comparison. Gower's metaphor makes the risings of 1381 an extremely violent, seminal moment in London's history. In writing these events as London's fall, he confirms its status as a great historical city alongside the ancient ones, which all fall and therefore feature in narratives of *translatio imperii*:

Preliā Thebarum, Cartaginis, illaque Rome
Non fuerant istis plena furore magis. (I, ll. 983-4)
[The battles of Thebes, Carthage and Rome were not more filled with madness
than these] (p. 71)

His choice of Troy as a principal comparator, therefore, is important, because its power endures, as it is transferred to Rome, and in some narratives, then onto London. As Gower charts the riots, he likens them to the fall of a great city, despite the rebels being of lower rank and coming from the same nation. He thus creates London as a city that has undergone the same trials as its great ancient predecessors, and also has some of their qualities.

In contrast, Christine does not draw a parallel between Troy and a contemporary city, but is inspired to surpass it by creating a fictional city. The *Cité des Dames* opens with the narrator Christine finding a mysterious book.

³⁶ Malte Urban, 'Past and Present: Gower's Use of Old Books in *Vox Clamantis*', in *John Gower: Manuscripts, Readers, Contexts*, ed. by Malte Urban (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), pp. 175-94 (p. 189).

Je cerchasse entour moy d'aucun petit livret, entre mains me vint d'aventure un livre estrange, non mie de mes volumes, qui avec autres livres m'avoit esté baillié si comme en garde. (p. 40)

[I was looking around me for some little book, and I found by chance a strange book – not at all one of my volumes, which had been given to me with some other books for me to look after – which fell into my hands.]

This 'livre estrange' appears to be a book with which the finder is unfamiliar, rather like that which Cornelius finds in the cupboard in the *Roman de Troie*, as already observed in Chapter One, and which the builders find in the wall in the *Roman de Perceforest*, which I examine shortly. Christine claims to have heard encouraging things about it previously, namely that its author Matheolus writes 'a la reverence des femmes' [in reverence of women] (p. 40).³⁷ But she soon finds it of 'mal prouffit a aucune edifice de vertu et de meurs' [ill gain to any structure of virtue and manners] (p. 42). She places it within a wider tradition of 'philosophes, poetes, tous orateurs' and notes that

semble que tous parlent par une mesmes bouche et tous accordent une semblable conclusion, determinant les meurs femenins enclins et plains de tous les vices. (p. 42)

[it seems that they all speak with one same mouth, and all agree on a similar/seeming conclusion, deciding that feminine manners are inclined towards and full of all vices.]

Christine laments the disparity between what she has read and the women she knows (pp. 44-6). Glenda McLeod and Katharina Wilson observe the way in which this exordium provides Christine with a way to read critically: she 'refutes

³⁷ Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet, 'Cadmus ou Carmenta: Réflexion sur le concept d'invention à la fin du Moyen Âge', in *What is Literature? 1100-1600*, ed. by François Cornilliat, Douglas Kelly and Ullrich Langer (Lexington, KY: French Forum, 1993), pp. 211-30 (p. 220) implies that this could have been Jean Le Fèvre's *Livre de Leesce*, a refutation of his translation of Matheolus's *Lamentations*.

what she cannot allow to stand, appropriates and recasts wherever possible'.³⁸ She models her own work on the anti-marriage treatises in order to write her answer to them.³⁹

Although Christine stresses that her work is not a dream vision, she is nonetheless offered subject matter by three mythical figures. She feels a 'ray de lumiere' [ray of light] (p. 46) jolt her out of lamenting being a woman; 'si comme' [as if] she were 'resveillee de somme' [awoken from sleep], three 'dames couronnees' [crowned women] appear to her. Christine thus dismisses the possibility that her book is a dream vision: inspired, she has selected this material. The women tell her that they have come to

te giter hors de l'ignorance, qui [...] ajoustes foy a ce que tu ne scez ne vois ne congnois autrement fors par pluralité d'opinions estranges. (p. 46)
[throw you out of ignorance, who [...] have faith in that which you neither know, see or understand except by a multitude of strange opinions.]

Male writers' opinions are both uniform and available in great quantity. Like the 'livre estrange', which is not from Christine's own corpus, or her library, these 'opinions estranges' do not fit with her experience of women: these misogynist ways of thinking are foreign to Christine. Although she is writing about moral women, she suggests that existing discussions of women do not reflect her experience, even if she is familiar with the language they are written in; she does not mention her principal source text for the classical women, Boccaccio's *De Mulieribus Claris* (1361) – which was also available in an anonymous French

³⁸ Glenda McLeod and Katharina Wilson, 'A Clerk in Name Only/A Clerk in All But Name: The Misogamous Tradition and *La Cité des Dames*', in *The City of Scholars: New Approaches to Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Margarete Zimmermann and Dina de Rentiis (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994), pp. 67-76 (p. 74); also p. 70 on this passage's function as an *exordium*.

³⁹ See Eleni Stecopoulos with Karl D. Uitti, 'Christine de Pizan's *Livre de la Cité des Dames*: The Reconstruction of Myth', in *Reinterpreting Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Earl Jeffrey Richards with Joan Williamson, Nadia Margolis and Christine Reno (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1992), pp. 48-62 (p. 49).

translation (1401) – in this discussion; she wants to give her city another genealogy.⁴⁰

Christine thus notes that the goddesses, who offer her advice, propose three examples of cities from writings about the ancient world, which will be superseded by her creation.

N'as tu pas leu que le roy Tros fonda la grant cité de Troye par l'ayde d'Apollo, de Minerve et de Neptunus que les gens de lors repputoient dieux, et aussi comment Cadmus fonda Thebes la cité par l'admonnestement des dieux? Et toutesvoya ycelles citez par espace de temps decheyrent et sont tournees si comme en ruyne. Mais je te prophetise comme vraye Sebile que ja ceste cité que tu, a nostre ayde, fonderas ne seras anichilee ne decherra. (p. 56)

[Haven't you read how king Tros founded the great city of Troy with the help of Apollo, Minerva and Neptune, whom the people of the time thought were gods, and also how Cadmus founded the city of Thebes by the gods' reproach? And yet these cities fell in time and as it were went to ruin. But I prophesy to you as a true Sibyl that this city that you will found, with our help, will never be reduced to nothing or fall.]

She first notes how two of these cities – Troy and Thebes, both the subjects of *romans antiques* – were built with divine help. Troy most closely parallels Christine's own city here, which is helped along by three ladies, because she names the three deities, Apollo, Neptune and Minerva, who contribute Troy's defining features in the *Roman de Troie* and its prose versions (ll. 25921-3; l. 25879; BnF, MS f. fr. 1612, fol. 119v). Rather than establishing a transfer of power, the examples in this passage form an implicit narrative of improvement, from male-governed cities built with divine help but which ultimately fall, to a longer-lasting city governed by females – the Amazon kingdom – which still falls. The latter should pave the way for Christine's eternal city of women. The goddess first asks Christine if she has read about Troy and invokes Minerva, who she later

⁴⁰ Giovanni Boccaccio, *Famous Women*, ed. and trans. by Virginia Brown (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); anonymous translation of Boccaccio, *Des Cleres et Nobles Femmes*, ed. by Jeanne Baroin and Josiane Haffen (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1993).

states ‘trouva par sa soubtiveté aucunes letres grecques que on apelle caracteres’ [invented by her subtlety some Greek letters that are called characters] (p. 170); she is a clear predecessor to Carmentis, whom I discuss in more detail later on, and indeed invented the letters she would have learnt first. When Christine mentions Thebes, she connects it with Cadmus, its founder, who also invented the Greek alphabet; she describes him in her *Epistre Othea* and her *Livre du Chemin de Long Estude*.⁴¹

Christine therefore places the language which she is using, French, as the heir to Greek learning. She underlines the French language’s capacity to interpret and contain Latin and Greek learning, whilst responding to the narrative of *translatio imperii et studii*. Unlike, for example, Wace, who shows how power moves to Britain and France after the fall of Rome, Christine replaces Rome (and implicitly, Latin) within *translatio imperii et studii*: only her *Cité des Dames* is eternal. It encompasses Rome’s power and thus may come to surpass it. The French language in which she writes can carry the learning from all these empires; because the city is a fiction, it will never fall.

In his *Confessio Amantis*, Gower justifies his choice of language by embedding it within a Latin history of his land, which was colonised by Trojans. The opening Latin lines of the *Confessio* circulated in all three recensions (1390, 1392, 1393); the possible connections between translation and multilingualism are discussed in more theoretical detail in the Introduction.⁴² Within this high Latin

⁴¹ See Cerquiglini-Toulet, ‘Cadmus’, in *What is Literature?* ed. by Cornilliat, Kelly and Langer, pp. 224-26 on Cadmus.

⁴² Macaulay, II (1901), pp. xxi-xxviii; Dhira Mahoney, ‘Gower’s Two Prologues to *Confessio Amantis*’, in *Re-Visioning Gower*, ed. by R. F. Yeager (Asheville: Pegasus, 1998), pp. 17-37 offers an overview of the historical contexts of the successive prologues.

register, Gower creates a concise history of the ‘Anglica [...] metra’ [English verse] (Prologue, d) in which he will write most of his poem.

Torpor, ebes sensus, scola parua labor minimusque
Causant quo minimus ipse minora canam:
Qua tamen Engisti lingua canit Insula Bruti
Anglica Carmente metra iuuante loquar.
Ossibus ergo carens que conterit ossa loqueris
Absit, et interpres stet procul oro malus. (Prologue, a-f)
[Dull wit, slight schooling, torpor, labour less, make slight the themes that I, least
of poets, sing. Let me, in Hengist’s tongue, in Brut’s isle sing, with Carmentis’s
help, tell forth my English verse. Far hence the boneless one whose speech grinds
bones; far hence be he who reads my verses ill.]⁴³

This account draws upon Geoffrey of Monmouth’s observations in his *Historia Regum Britannie* upon Britain’s languages, which are closely connected with the invaders and rulers who have introduced and used them. Elsewhere, in his *Vox Clamantis*, Gower sings in ‘Insula Bruti’ [Island of Brut] (I, l. 1963), the island that is first colonised by Brutus, according to Geoffrey. In Gower’s dream at the end of Book One of the *Vox Clamantis*, the only place that will give him harbour, and put an end to his journeying around the world, is the ‘Insula Bruti’: he belongs there. He thus frames his English account with brief Latin verses; along with French, Latin is one of the two languages in which English histories had thus far been written. This passage proves enlightening for a reading of the epigraph; indeed, Andrew Galloway has even suggested that the English poem ‘attains the status of a gloss, with all the liberty that status allows to explicate in very different terms the tradition of Latin, clerical traditions’.⁴⁴ The epigraph to the prologue suggests that Gower’s choice of ‘Engisti lingua’ follows such a model of writing.

⁴³ This English translation is taken from John Gower, *The Latin Verses in the ‘Confessio Amantis’*: *An Annotated Translation*, ed. by Siân Echard and Claire Fanger (East Lansing: Colleagues Press, 1991), p. 3.

⁴⁴ Andrew Galloway, ‘Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*, *The Prick of Conscience* and the History of the Latin Gloss in Early English Literature’, in *Manuscripts*, ed. by Urban, pp. 39-70 (p. 55).

It is relatively new to Britain according to Geoffrey, but by following the example of Carmentis's language – and even her ability to invent – Gower is able to write well in this language, which does not have a long heritage. On the other hand, the British past has been lost, perhaps because it does not survive in written form, but only, for example, in Geoffrey of Monmouth's fictional translation. Later in his prologue, Gower states he writes 'for Engelondes sake', that is the country of the Angli, whom Geoffrey equates with the Saxons (Book 11, para. 204, ll. 545-59). The past power of 'Insula Bruti' has been transferred into that of England, the country now named after its invaders: Gower thus creates, in his juxtaposition of Latin epigraph and English prologue, a history for his language that connects Britain's moments of *translatio imperii et studii*.

Gower further complicates the identity of the place to which he belongs by noting the invasions of this country and its capital. In the prologue to his *Confessio Amantis*, Gower draws on Geoffrey of Monmouth's idea of London, indexing the Trojan invasion of that city: it is

[...] newe Troye,
Which tok of Brut his ferste joye (Prologue, 3rd recension, ll. 37-8)

At the end of the *Historia Regum Britannie*, and long before his birth, Brutus's people no longer dominate this land (Book 11, paras 207-8). Gower notes he speaks 'Engisti lingua', the language of Hengest and the Saxon invaders, who massacre the British men at projected peace-talks 'eis hoc signum: "nimet oure saxas"' [on his signal, 'nimet oure saxas'] (Book 6, para. 104, l. 462) in the

Historia Regum Britannie.⁴⁵ Though he lives in a land named for Brutus, he cannot access the Britons' language, because it is hidden in the past by that of Hengest (Prologue, c). He sings in the Saxons' language (Prologue, c), but with help from Carmentis, the creator of the Latin alphabet (Prologue, d). Siân Echard and Claire Fanger propose that Gower here refers to the Latin glosses and verses that occur throughout the poem.⁴⁶ However, Carmentis's help could refer to Latin's part in developing the 'anglica [...] metra' [English verse] (Prologue, d): he uses the Latin alphabet, of which she is the mythical inventor, metrical models developed for that language and indeed translates stories from Ovid, for example. In a medieval parallel, Anglo-Saxon scribes were key to the development of written French using a Latin alphabet 'in the century after the Norman conquest', because, as Michael Clanchy observes:

the practice of writing laws in the vernacular had become so well established in England by the time of the Norman Conquest that it probably provided the precedent for the so-called Laws of William the Conqueror being written in the new vernacular of French in the twelfth century.⁴⁷

Gower's lines suggest a similar process in which the Latin alphabet helps English to establish its written conventions.⁴⁸

Gower therefore highlights the importance of code-switching for both his poem and its reception. Latin might provide further help to his English lines, as the final line of that epigraph, before Gower begins writing in English, indicates. Geoffrey of Monmouth uses 'interprez' for Hengest's daughter's interpreter

⁴⁵ For a detailed examination of the language dynamics of this passage, see Butterfield, *Familiar Enemy*, pp. 37-44.

⁴⁶ Echard and Fanger, 'Introduction', to *The Latin Verses*, pp. xxv-liv (p. xxviii).

⁴⁷ Clanchy, p. 18; see Short, 'Patrons and Polyglots' in *Anglo-Norman Studies*, ed. by Chibnall, pp. 229-49.

⁴⁸ On Gower's use of Ovid, see Conrad Mainzer, 'John Gower's Use of the "Mediaeval Ovid" in the *Confessio Amantis*', *Medium Ævum*, 41 (1972), 215-29.

(Book 6, para. 100, ll. 349 and 350), when she wishes to speak with the British king Vortigern. Given the three figures' associations with distinct languages all used in Britain, 'interpres' perhaps most clearly indicates that Gower does not think his poem will be received in only one language, but that it will be translated. He was right: a fifteenth-century Castilian version and a Portuguese version are extant.⁴⁹ But perhaps he was also thinking of how his immediate contemporaries in Brutus's isle would read his work. 'Interpres' might suggest a reader who would translate 'Engisti lingua', when written down, into the language invented by Carmentis. The highly allusive, even obscure, epigraphs suggest he intended his poem for a reader with a high degree of Latin fluency. This implied reader may have found English more difficult: throughout every manuscript of the *Confessio Amantis*, brief Latin glosses explain the premises of the tales and who is speaking to whom.⁵⁰ These are far less obscure than Gower's Latin epigraphs.⁵¹ He shapes English as a language capable of mythological and religious expression of the highest kind: by including the difficult Latin epigraphs, he confirms English's status as a language that works seamlessly with such allegorical poetry. One story he retells in the *Confessio Amantis* about Latin has particular resonance for his decision to write this text in English: the migrant Carmentis's invention of the Latin alphabet. In this story, the language associated with the land is in fact unfamiliar in its written form. This paradox, which recalls Geoffrey of

⁴⁹ Bernardo Santano Moreno, 'The Fifteenth-Century Portuguese and Castilian Translations of John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*', *Manuscripta*, 35 (1991), 23-34.

⁵⁰ See Echard, 'Glossing Gower in Latin, in English and *in absentia*: the case of Bodleian Ashmole 35', in *Re-Visioning Gower*, ed. by Yeager, pp. 237-56 on scribal presentation of the glosses.

⁵¹ Echard and Fanger, p. xxviii.

Monmouth's perplexity before the very old book, also recurs in the *Roman de Perceforest*.

Carmentis

In Book Four of the *Confessio Amantis*, Gower emphasises the importance of the virtue of labour, to combat the sin of sloth. In doing so, he describes *translatio studii* from east to west, and places Carmentis as part of that movement. The alchemists' achievements especially catch his attention, and he describes the processes they developed in detail. He finally notes that 'fewe understonde' (IV, l. 2614) the art, but that

...thei that writen the scripture
Of Grek, Arabe and of Caldee,
Thei were of such Auctorite
That thei first founden out the weie
Of al that thou hast herd me seie. (IV, ll. 2626-30)

These writers have the power to discover and create, but Gower associates alchemy principally with alphabets that he does not use. He exhorts the reader to

toward oure Marches hier,
Of the Latins if thou wolt hier. (IV, ll. 2633-4).

This geographical turn in his attention leads him to sketch a history of the Latin language; this transition parallels that made by Isidore of Seville in the seventh century at the start of his *Etymologiae*.⁵² This phrase is ambiguous. The OED notes that 'Latins' can indicate those in Western Christendom 'in contradistinction to the Greeks' although it does not give any examples, and prefers to draw a parallel with 'Frank', or alternatively, the Latins might live nearer to Gower's perceived borders – perhaps those of English speakers – but they could still

⁵² Isidore of Seville, *Etimologías*, ed. by Casquero and Reta, I (1993), Book 1, 3: 4-10.

remain foreign.⁵³ This name might well point to a regional identity, that of some of the Romans' predecessors, i.e. 'li Latin' in the list of tribes who fight for Turnus in the *Roman d'Eneas*.⁵⁴

After proposing the alchemists as a positive example of labour, he introduces Carmentis as a figure of writing closer to where he lives.

Carmente made of hire engin
The ferste lettres of Latin,
Of which the tunge Romein cam (IV, ll. 2637-9)

Before the 'tunge Romein' developed, it first took written form; whether this refers to the Romans' spoken language, or some form of romance vernacular, writing comes first. Although the *MED* principally notes 'romein' as an adjective and as a noun, which generally refer to the language spoken by the Romans or their nationality, in one example from a herbal, it signifies the French language.

Sacrefolium: Full in englishe tonge, yn romayne, jubarbe.

In this passage, it is likely that Gower refers to Latin, because Carmente's successors work out how it will be 'soned' [sounded]. The association of the letters with their pronunciation was described by Isidore of Seville in his *Etymologiae*, but Latin's descendant languages are not treated there.⁵⁵ 'Ferste' further implies an early written form of that language, which gives rise to a spoken form; in the twelve other instances where Gower uses 'romein' within the *Confessio Amantis*, it refers to the Roman people or being a Roman.

⁵³ See Simon Gaunt, *Marco Polo's Le Devisement du Monde*, p. 123 for discussion of 'Latins' in another context.

⁵⁴ *Eneas*, l. 3952.

⁵⁵ Isidore of Seville, *Etimologías*, ed. by Casquero and Reto, 1 (1993), Book 1, 4: 4-18.

Inventing the alphabet permits the creation of a grammar for that language. Carmentis's alphabet enables Aristarchus [...] with Donat and Dindimus' (IV, ll. 2640-1) to decide

How that Latin schal be componed
And in what wise it schal be soned. (IV, ll. 2643-4)

These processes of standardising the language's syntax and pronunciation, as well as the emergence of rhetoric (IV, l. 2649), mean that Jerome can later 'transpose' (IV, l. 2656) the Bible into Latin, and

Many an other writere ek
Out of Caldee, Arabe and Grek
With gret labour the bokes wise
Translateden. (IV, ll. 2657-60)

These writers all work to grammaticalise Latin; consequently, it is used enough at the seat of power, Rome, to warrant texts in the alchemists' languages being translated into it, as Gower observes. In this passage, he sketches a history of Latin's development as it is standardised. He begins with Carmentis's invention of the alphabet, and concludes with its status as a language of translation of 'bokes wise', in which the Latins – including Ovid – study (IV, ll. 2660-62, l. 2669).

When Christine writes about Carmentis, the stakes are very different for her as a woman at the French court, as opposed to Gower, an elite male writing within a London coterie. His principal source text is Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*; Christine used Boccaccio's *De Claris Mulieribus*, perhaps in French translation.⁵⁶ Her Carmentis is more detailed than Gower's, and is not placed

⁵⁶ On Christine's knowledge of Latin and use of French translations, see Constant J. Mews, 'Latin Learning in Christine de Pizan's *Livre de Paix*', in *Healing the Body Politic*, ed. by Green and Mews, pp. 61-80.

within a longer history of Latin.⁵⁷ However, she retells its history in French: the implications of Christine's retelling are distinct from Gower's English narrative, because at this point, writers had written literary texts in French for over three hundred years, and there was a tradition of critiquing those texts (most obviously, the *Querelle* in which Christine made her name). Writers were already nostalgic for the language's past, frequently expressing the sentiment that everything had already been said.⁵⁸ By fictionalizing the origins of Latin in French, she offers a possible analogy for the history of that language, as Latin progresses from a fledgling written language in need of codification to a language of high culture. Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet draws persuasive parallels between Carmentis and Christine; for Thelma Fenster, Carmentis's transmission of this story highlights Christine's 'confidence that [Latin writing] could be transmitted in French'.⁵⁹

Indeed, she remarks that:

A good deal of [Christine's] work participated in a [...] movement, encouraged by the growing consciousness of a national language: the desire to install French as a language of learning.⁶⁰

Christine's translation of this particular myth tells the story of a woman giving a language an alphabet and grammar so that it may be appropriate for a powerful empire to use. This example indicates Christine creating a potential model for her own preferred language.

⁵⁷ For a discussion of Christine's use of Petrarch and Boccaccio, see Rosalind Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence of Women: Reading Beyond Gender* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 131-74.

⁵⁸ See *La Couleur de la mélancholie*, especially pp. 9-12, pp. 57-88 on fourteenth-century attitudes to the past and also Michel Zink, 'Le Roman', in *Grundriss der Romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters*, VIII/1, ed. by Jauss et al, pp. 197-218.

⁵⁹ Cerquiglini-Toulet, 'Cadmus', p. 223; Thelma Fenster, "'Perdre son latin': Christine de Pizan and Vernacular Humanism", in *Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Desmond, pp. 91-107 (p. 91).

⁶⁰ Fenster, "'Perdre son latin'", in *Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Desmond, p. 91.

Carmentis's gender is moreover more significant for Christine than for Gower. Christine describes Carmentis's creation of Latin, a language which she states she never learned: Christine laments that she retained little from overhearing discussions between her father and her husband.⁶¹ Carmentis forms part of a series of highly learned ancient women, and Christine thus creates a new genealogy of women that she might imitate, or as Eleni Stecopoulos observes, 'she founds the study of women's history as a legitimate scholarly or clerkly discipline'.⁶² The distinctions between the status of Latin and the vernacular are important for understanding both Gower and Christine's treatments of this myth, but Christine's account is also marked by a sense of kinship with another erudite woman. Her account of Carmentis is provoked by the stories of Medea and Circe, whose learning in 'art', 'science' and 'enchantemens' [art, science and enchantments] (pp. 162-4) leads the narrator to ask the goddesses 'se il fu oncques femme qui de soy trovast aucune science non par avant seue' [if there was ever a woman who invented a kind of knowledge that was previously unknown, all by herself] (p. 164). Christine's emphasis on these women's learning – rather than, for example, their seductive magic – indicates her desire to present them as female scholarly predecessors. She suggests, for instance, that Medea 'par l'art de son enchantement fist conquerir a Jason la toison d'or' [by the art of her enchantment, had Jason conquer the Golden Fleece] (p. 164), in a critical reading of the *Histoire*

⁶¹ *Advision*, 3: IX; see Fenster, "'Perdre son latin'", in *Christine de Pizan*, ed. by Desmond, p. 92.

⁶² Stecopoulos, 'The Reconstruction of Myth', in *Reinterpreting Christine*, ed. by Richards with Williamson et al, p. 50.

Ancienne's Troy section.⁶³ Her identification with, admiration of – and even envy of – these exceptionally learned ancient women is poignant.

Carmentis's story enacts *translatio studii et imperii*. She is knowledgeable, fertile and a leader of migration. 'Grant clergece estoit es letres grecques' [She was a great clerk in Greek letters] (p. 166); she is reputed to be Mercury's lover and mother of his child because 'tant ot bel langage' [she had such beautiful language].⁶⁴ Christine thus establishes a suggestive parallel between Carmentis and the figure of Philology, who marries Mercury, in Martianus Capella's *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*.⁶⁵ Carmentis leads her people from Arcadia to the future site of Rome, although in the *Cité des Dames*, this is only implied: her father is the Arcadian king.⁶⁶

Ceste dame, par certaines mutacions qui avindrent en la terre ou elle estoit, se transporta de son pays son filz et grant foison peuple qui la suivi avec elle a grant navire en la terre d'Ytalye et arriva sur le fleuve du Tibre. La descendi, si monta sur un hault mont qu'elle nomma du nom de son pere Palentin, sur lequel mont la cité de Romme fu puis fondee. (p. 166)

[This lady, because of some changes which happened in the land where she was, took herself, her son and a great many people, who followed her in a great fleet, from her country to the land of Italy and arrived on the river Tiber. There she got off, and went up a hill, which she named after her father Palentin, on which hill the city of Rome was later founded.]

Her journey foreshadows that of Aeneas from Troy to Italy. Unlike Boccaccio, who notes that both her father and son are kings of Arcadia, Christine does not mention Carmentis's starting point; however, Carmentis arrives at the future site of Rome prophetically conscious of the future 'haultece de l'empire de Romme'

⁶³ See Gabriella Parussa, 'Introduction', to *Epistre Othea*, pp. 36-46 on Christine's knowledge of the *Histoire Ancienne*. Christine depicts Medea less favourably in the *Epistre Othea*, para. 58, but still highlights her learning.

⁶⁴ On Carmentis's fertility and importance for origins in Jean Le Fèvre's *Livre de Leesce*, see *La Couleur de la mélancholie*, pp. 115-16.

⁶⁵ Martianus Capella, *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, ed. by James Willis (Leipzig: Teubner, 1983), pp. 28-58 handles their marriage.

⁶⁶ It is also Mercury's birthplace in *De Nuptiis*, p. 5, ll. 10-11.

[greatness of the Roman empire] (p. 168).⁶⁷ In naming the hill after her father, she commemorates her own genealogy and creates a possible geographical origin for her journey: her father's kingdom. Her first act is to create this place's genealogy.

Her principal achievement, creating an alphabet, thus contributes to the movement of learning and empire to Rome.

Si lui sembla que ce ne seroit pas chose honeste que, quant la haultece de l'empire de Romme vendroit, qui tout le monde devoit seignourir, que ilz usassent de letres et de karacteres estranges et mendres d'autres pays. (p. 168)
[It seemed to her that it would not be an honest thing if, when the dominance of the Roman empire came, which was to be master of the whole world, they used the lesser, foreign letters and characters of other countries.]

As Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet notes, she is a 'héros fondateur, fondateur de ville comme inventeur de l'alphabet'.⁶⁸ For Carmentis, the Roman Empire must not use another country's 'estranges' letters; by implication, it might, for example, currently use the Greek letters she knows already. The familiar and the foreign are relative: as Carmentis has had to learn Greek, she is creating an alphabet and a grammar, which the Romans, who will come in the future, will also have to learn.

Her codification of the language makes it foreign for its users:

Tant fist et tant estudia que elle trouva propres letres, du tout differenciees des autres nacions, c'est assavoir l'a.b.c. et l'ordenance du latin, l'assemblee d'icelles, et la difference des voyeux et des mutes et toute l'entree de la science de grammaire. (p. 168)
[She did so much and studied so much that she invented fitting letters, completely differentiated from the other nations, that is to say, the alphabet and the order of Latin, how those are put together, and the difference between vowels and unvoiced sounds, and all the beginnings of the knowledge of grammar.]

Latin is codified by a migrant born in Arcadia; 'propre' indicates that the letters are appropriate, or fitting, for creating this written language, and 'trouva' suggests that she may be creating an alphabet that was already present to be found. These

⁶⁷ Boccaccio, *Famous Women*, XXVII, ll. 1-2.

⁶⁸ Cerquiglini-Toulet, 'Cadmus', in *What is Literature?* ed. by Cornilliat, Kelly and Langer, p. 219.

letters are not from another country but the Romans have not adopted them yet either; nonetheless, 'propres' implies that these letters will be their property. A similar line of thought informs Jacques Derrida's opening to his *Monolingualisme de l'Autre*:

Je n'ai qu'une langue, or ce n'est pas la mienne. (p. 15)

This modern paradox – examined at greater length in the Introduction – suggests that all language is unfamiliar to us: although we only have one preferred language, it can never be ours. No-one is not born speaking, but, like Carmentis, who is first introduced as being erudite in 'letres grecques' [Greek letters] (p. 166), everyone has to learn a language. Her first language, Greek, is depicted as a script primarily associated with a particular group, learned men. A similar process applies to the language that she creates as an adult, and thus it is at least her second language. The order in which she develops it – first 'l'a.b.c', then its 'ordenance', how letters fit together or 'l'assemblee', before identifying the 'voyeux' and 'mutes', the vowels and the unvoiced letters, and finally embarking on its 'science de grammaire' – suggests that she takes time over her progressive codification of this language. By the time Christine writes, Latin is 'described as a language ruled by grammar' and was frequently synonymous with it, but in this passage, it is depicted as a language that is not ready for books to be written in it.⁶⁹

Furthermore, she observes internal difference within the language:

Carmentis distinguishes the parts of the syllable from one another. This language is a 'système dans lequel le signifié central, originaire ou transcendantal, n'est

⁶⁹ Lusignan, 'Written French and Latin', p. 186.

jamais absolument présent hors d'un système de différences'.⁷⁰ Meaning is created not by any one central person, or signifier, but rather through a series of sets of distinctions: no letter or word has meaning in its own right, but it gains significance when set alongside others. It is the combination of letters and sounds that enables meaning to be created. In order to invent the language, Carmentis makes its sets of oppositions, for example, how letters and sounds should be distinguished, even within the syllable. She creates a language that marks difference both internally through phonetics and from other languages.

Latin is therefore a foreign language for Carmentis, because it is defined against her own initial learning in Greek: it is made for another incipient nation and it is not her first tongue. The letters are 'du tout différenciées des autres nations' [completely differentiated from the other nations] (p. 168); immediately, this ellipsis not only makes the letters new, but creates a separate identity for their users. She connects Latin with a burgeoning nation: it does not yet transcend national boundaries – as it is often portrayed doing by medieval writers – but rather, it shapes those boundaries which the Romans will fight over, just like any others. At this early time in its development, Latin is therefore presented as a *koine* that its future users must learn.

This picture parallels that of the contemporary usage of both written French and Latin at Charles VII's court. In a study of the model letters compiled by Odart Morchesne, one of the king's notaries and secretaries, Serge Lusignan observes that

⁷⁰ Derrida, *L'Écriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1967), p. 411.

Latin appears to be the exclusive language for church matters, diplomacy, and for addresses of a certain social status. Otherwise the language was a matter of choice.⁷¹

However, Lusignan equally notes that, within this set of model letters, French was recommended ‘when the letter was addressed to lay persons, whereas Latin must be preferred for the clergy’.⁷² He uses this example to illustrate his argument that in this period literary French underwent a re-Latinisation, noting that ‘many of the significant nouns, adjectives, adverbs and verbs share a common root’.⁷³ He finally reminds us that Latin and French were two Romance languages, and that these highly learned men could have switched between them.⁷⁴ In particular, Latin retained specialised functions at the court of Charles VII, but both languages could be used in some formal situations, and so there was considerable overlap in their usage. The formal written registers of both Latin and French had to be learnt.

Carmentis’s alphabet thus differentiates the fledgling Latin from other languages, and her letters are equally distinct from each other. These distinctions shape users’ relations with others, and serve to cement an identity for the users of that language as Roman. She further seeks to increase the usage of Latin:

Lesquelles lettres et science elle bailla et apprist aux gens et volt que
communement fust sceu. (p. 168)
[Which letters and knowledge she gave over and taught to the people and wanted
it to be known communally.]

Her creation of Latin’s codes – its grammar and alphabet – equally means that its own users must learn it, and thus, to some degree, that it is a foreign language to them.

⁷¹ Lusignan, ‘Written French and Latin’, p. 192.

⁷² Lusignan, ‘Written French and Latin’, p. 193.

⁷³ Lusignan, ‘Written French and Latin’, p. 194, also more generally, p. 189 and p. 197.

⁷⁴ Lusignan, ‘Written French and Latin’, p. 198.

Furthermore, this code retroactively instantiates the idea of an oral language. By implication, the mythical Carmentis invents the idea of a time when Latin was a vernacular: a ‘domestic, native, indigenous’ language (OED). The codification of a language creates it as foreign, or unfamiliar, at least, to its users; the evidence of the first vernacular theoretical works on language bears comparison with this suggestion, as the *Razos de Trobar* were written in Catalonia for non-native speakers of Occitan and Walter de Bibbesworth’s *Tretiz* was written in England for those wishing to improve their French, one of the ‘accepted languages of record’.⁷⁵ However, it is unclear how accurately these reflect the state of those languages, which indeed may also be the case for Carmentis’s alphabet.

One word from the quotation about Carmentis’s dissemination of Latin especially reveals how far such a newly codified language may spread and still remain foreign to its users: ‘communement’. Godefroy and the *DMF* both first define it as ‘en comun, ensemble’.⁷⁶ Godefroy’s examples from Villehardouin and Brunetto Latini are particularly relevant here:

Ensi furent communement li Grieu et li François ensemble de toutes choses.
[And thus, communally, the Greeks and the French were together in everything.]

Je ne sai se c’est a dire de son lignage seulement ou des Alemans, ou se il ce dist de tous communement.
[I don’t know if this is to say about his lineage only or about the Germans, or if he says this of everyone, communally.]

The first example suggests that ‘communement’ can exceed existing group identities; the second example suggests the possibility of a universal language.

⁷⁵ William Rothwell, ‘Introduction’, to Walter de Bibbesworth, *Le Tretiz*, ed. by William Rothwell (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1990), pp. 1-2.

⁷⁶ Godefroy, II (1883), p. 198.

Furthermore, the following lines from the *Roman de la Rose* suggest that

‘communement’ indicates a connection between language and ownership:⁷⁷

Tu qui me requiers de gloser
Veauz oposer! Ainceis m’oposes
Que, tout ait Deus faites les choses,
Au meins ne fist il pas le non,
Ci te respon: espeir, que non,
Au meins celui qu’eles ont ores
Si les pot il bien nomer lores
Quant il prumierement cria
Tout le monde et quanqu’il i a;
Mais il vost que nons leur trouvasse
A mon plaisir, et les nomasse
Proprement et comunement
Pour creistre nostre entendement. (ll. 7082-94)

[You, who want me to gloss, you want to oppose me! Oppose me then – even though he made the things, at least, he didn’t make names; I respond thus: Perhaps not; at least not the ones which they have now (although he could have well named them when he first made the whole world and everything in it). But he wanted me to invent names at my leisure, and to name them properly and collectively, so that our understanding should grow.]

Here, ‘communement’ is set alongside ‘proprement’. It describes the set of people for whom Raison invented the names of things, in order that their understanding should grow. ‘Proprement’ suggests belonging, indicating that others might not have these words: ‘communement’ therefore carries political connotations, which point to a group that is defined by sharing a common language. Given that God did not name everything when he created the world, Raison suggests that he wanted her to find names for things: he certainly did not give things their current names. She points to the arbitrariness of the signifier when she says the lover might have been angry if she had called ‘coilles reliques’ [testicles relics] (l. 7111) and ‘reliques coilles’ [relics testicles] (l. 7112). David Rollo further indicates that Raison

⁷⁷ *Le Roman de la Rose*, ed. by Ernest Langlois, 5 vols (Paris: SATF, 1914-1924).

is well aware of the fact that the signs in question are so far removed from consubstantiality with their referents that they in themselves have become things, graphemes of a literate culture of supplementarity.⁷⁸

Nonetheless,

Se fames nes noment en France
Ce n'est fors desacoustumance (ll. 7131-2)
[If women don't name them in France, it's only because they're unaccustomed to doing so.]

Nation and gender, for example, shape linguistic habits; Rollo suggests this observation implies a 'propriety contingent upon usage by a collectivity of speakers'.⁷⁹ The linguistic practice marks that set of people – French women – and therefore excludes others (French men; English women, etc): this language will always remain unfamiliar somewhere. When Carmentis gives the language grammar and an alphabet, it is created as a language foreign to its monolingual users.

Moreover, the reception of this language confirms its capacity to form a people's identity in relation to others. The people

de celle contree, pour la science du latin, qui par celle dame fu la trouvee, se appellerent par grant honneur Latins. (p. 168)
[of this country, called themselves Latins, with great honour, on account of the knowledge of Latin, which was invented there by this lady.]

They name themselves after the language Carmentis has codified in order to ensure a 'perpetuelle memoire' [eternal memory] (p. 168) of her and her achievements. This language moulds both the people and the land.

Et qui plus est, pour ce que *yta* en latin, qui veult dire en françois *ouyl*, est la souveraine affirmacion d'icellui langage latin, ne leur souffit mie encore que ycelle contree feust appelee terre latine. Ains voudrent que tout le pays de oultre les mons, qui moult est grant et large et ou a maintes diverses contrees et seignouries, fust appellé Ytalye. (p. 168)

⁷⁸ David Rollo, *Kiss My Relics: Hermaphroditic Fictions of the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), pp. 187-8.

⁷⁹ *Kiss my Relics*, p. 185.

[And what is more, because *yta* in Latin – which means *ouyl* in French – is the sovereign affirmation of this Latin language, it was not at all enough for them to call this country Latin land. So they wanted the whole country, beyond the hills, which is very big and wide and where there are many diverse countries and fiefdoms, to be called Italy.]

Here, Christine is responding to both Boccaccio's and Dante's conceptions of Italy. She omits the praise of Italy in Boccaccio and the anonymous French translation, but what she does preserve, at the end of Carmentis's story, is the imaginative work in *lieux de mémoire* required to create a history:

De ceste dame Carmentis furent nommez dictiez *carmen* en latin et mesmes les Rommains, qui depuis vindrent lonctemps apres, nommerent une des portes de la cité Romme Carmentelle, lesquieulx noms [...] ne changierent puis, si comme il appert aujourd'uy qu'encores durent. (pp. 168-70)
[From this lady Carmentis, songs were named *carmen* in Latin and even the Romans, who came a long time afterwards, named one of the gates of the city of Rome Carmentelle, which names [...] they did not change, as is clear today, for they still remain.]

Christine equally seems to be responding to a linguistic idea of Italy which is equally expressed by Dante in his *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, which did not, however, circulate widely.⁸⁰

Qui autem *sì* dicunt a predictis finibus [Ianuensium] orientalem tenent, videlicet usque ad promuntorium illud Ytalie qua sinus Adriatici maris incipit, et Siciliam.⁸¹
[Those who say *sì*, however, live to the east of those boundaries [of the Genoese], all the way to that outcrop of Italy from which the gulf of the Adriatic begins, and in Sicily.]

If she did know this passage, Christine has altered Dante's *sì* to fit with the common name Italy, but this does not explain why she mentions the name of a territory which she states exists only as a desire. She is rethinking Latin as a pan-

⁸⁰ Earl Jeffrey Richards, 'Christine de Pizan, the Conventions of Courtly Diction, and Italian Humanism', in *Reinterpreting Christine*, ed. by Richards with Williamson et al, pp. 250-71 (p. 262) also discusses Christine's understanding of Dante's linguistic ideas in spite of the small circulation of manuscripts of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*; for comparison, Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan*, speculatively sketches out how Christine could have accessed Petrarch's *De Viris Illustribus*, pp. 131-2.

⁸¹ *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, I: VIII, para. 6.

European written language, by mythologizing its history as a national language, and thus as a predecessor to French. She does so in a language that is also continuing to develop its geographical spread. In creating Latin's early history in French, she shows that it too can record the history of a prestige language. She thus raises the possibility that it will enjoy as long success as Latin does.

Both Gower and Christine imagine a time when Latin was a modern language in order to rethink the status of the languages in which they write, and to reposition their relationships with Latin. Although it is often depicted as an ancient language used all over Europe, both these writers imagine its initial codification as the future language of the Roman Empire. This moment is vital to understand how Gower and Christine conceive of language development and acquisition; when the migrant scholar Carmentis creates Latin's alphabet and grammar, she makes it foreign to its speakers. In their depictions of Carmentis's work, they both envisage the early (and momentous) consequences of *translatio studii*.⁸²

Conclusion

Troy is a place of cultural origins for Christine and Gower; in this chapter, I have shown how the aesthetics of translation remain in play in their work, even in texts which they do not claim as translations. Troy offers a genealogy for Gower's London and Britain and for Christine's *Cité des Dames*, which supersedes that pagan city, as well as providing the setting for Christine's *Epistre Othea*, for

⁸² See Earl Jeffrey Richards, 'Christine de Pizan and Sacred History', in *The City of Scholars*, ed. by Zimmermann and de Rentiis, pp. 15-30 (pp. 27-8) for an argument that the *Cité des Dames* is a development of the *translatio studii* tradition.

which she invents a fictional narrator-goddess. But neither writer locates their texts' origins there: Christine's and Gower's understanding of translation is most connected with the framework of exemplarity. They both conceive of their texts as new and not handed down to them, even if they draw on long lines of thought to do so. Their presentations of their textual production no longer deploy the topos of translation from a very old book within traditions of writing about Troy but it is still used by one writer, whose work survives in manuscripts from the fifteenth century. In the next chapter, I examine how the *Roman de Perceforest* writer creates an elaborate version of this trope as well as inventing a Trojan and Greek genealogy for Britain, which he introduces with a partial copy of a French translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britannie*.

Christine and Gower's most detailed reflection on translation is occasioned by retelling the story of the mythical figure Carmentis. By telling the story of the creation of Latin as a national language in French and English, Latin becomes a potential model of success for their own languages. It is redefined not as a pan-European constant, but as a fledgling second language that had to develop its own alphabet and grammar in order for it to be learnt.

I turn now to the *Roman de Perceforest*, which, though perhaps written in some form in 1330-1350, only survives in a fifteenth-century *remaniement*. In this text, characters frequently find that they are unfamiliar with the language that they are supposed to speak, and indeed, with their own identities, which they have already been allotted, within their newly-conquered culture. The *Roman de Perceforest* writer treats the questions of translation, naming and textual production in a new setting, which contrasts suggestively with Christine and

Gower's treatments. It opens with two claims to have found a very old book, and begins by translating Geoffrey of Monmouth; the *Roman de Perceforest* writer's deployment of the Trojan myth – as offering both Trojan and Greek origins for Britain, when the Greeks invade a Britain already inhabited by Trojans – offers a contrastive response to the selective, moral ends to which Gower and Christine employ the constellation of Trojan stories. The writer creates imperial and cultural origins for the Britain depicted within this text through reimagining the consequences of the Trojan War.

4. The Uncanny Translation: the *Roman de Perceforest*

The *Roman de Perceforest* tells the story of Alexander the Great's invasion of Britain; his men conquer the forests, and for this, one of his men is awarded the name Perceforest. The text narrates their attempts to bring law and order to the wilderness of Britain, which turns out to be largely populated by those of Trojan descent; in Book Four, nearly all the characters are wiped out when the Romans invade, and the final three books describe their offspring's attempts to rebuild a devastated country, before the Danes invade to restore those of Trojan ancestry to the throne, and almost every trace of the Greeks' settlement in Britain is eradicated.

The text survives in four fifteenth-century manuscripts, of which at least two can be shown to have been produced at Philippe le Bon's court at Burgundy.¹ Scholars have often dated its composition to 1330-1350 in Hainaut, based on internal evidence, but I think it remains most logical to date the text with the manuscript evidence for the purposes of this thesis, in which translation and textual production are so closely connected.² After having edited four volumes of

¹ *Perceforest*, ed. by Gilles Roussineau, 9 vols to date (Geneva: Droz, 1987-present); Roussineau, 'Introduction', to *Perceforest: Quatrième Partie, Tome I* (Geneva: Droz, 1987), pp. ix-cxiii (pp. xxi-xxxiii). Further references to this edition given in parentheses within the text, by book, volume and page number. See Alphonse Bayot, *La Légende de Troie à la cour de Bourgogne* (Bruges: Plancke, 1908) for an early examination of the popularity of the Troy story at that court; he notes the library possessed copies of Dares Phrygius, Dictys Cretensis, Benoît, Guido, Raoul Lefèvre's *Roman de Jason* and his *Recueil des Histoires de Troie* and Jacques Milet's French translation of Guido, p. 50.

² For examples of the traditional dating, see Jane H. M. Taylor, 'Introduction', to *Roman de Perceforest: première partie*, ed. by Jane H. M. Taylor (Geneva: Droz, 1979), pp. 11-58 (p. 29) and Sylvia Huot, *Postcolonial Fictions in the Roman de Perceforest: Cultural Identities and Hybridities* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2007), p. 2; for the possibility of dating the *Perceforest* later, see Tania van Hemelryck, 'Soumettre le *Perceforest* à la question: une entreprise périlleuse?' *Le Moyen Français*, 57 (2005), 369-79.

the *Perceforest*, Gilles Roussineau indicates that this was a ‘remaniement en profondeur’.³ Janet van der Meulen, who has put forward persuasive arguments for a fourteenth-century date of composition, based on identifying personages within the text, also agrees that it underwent a *remaniement* at the Burgundian court, by David Aubert.⁴ No copy of this earlier version survives; as such, it is impossible to know how far Aubert modified the text. I thus suggest that it makes sense to place the text historically with those manuscripts, at Philippe le Bon’s court.⁵ The *Roman de Perceforest* went on to enjoy modest success in print;⁶ it appeared in two early editions (1528 and 1531) as well as in a 1558 Italian print translation and in a Spanish manuscript from the 1570s.⁷

It claims to be a translation of a lost part of British history.

Pour mettre en escript ou langage de France une ystoire celee d’un gentil roy qui jadis regna en la Grant Bretagne, tellement m’en vueil entremectre par quoy elle viengne a la congnoissance de tous preudhommes qui du lire se voudront entremectre. Pour quoy elle fut celee entre les fais des Bretons et mise a neant et par quelle voie le dieu de proesse et chevalerie l’apporta de la Grant Bretagne deça la mer, ce sçarez vous ou commencement de l’ystoire dont a parler vous promet. (1.1, p. 1)

³ Roussineau, ‘Introduction’, to *Perceforest: Première Partie, Tome I* (Geneva: Droz, 2007), pp. ix–ccxxii (p. ix).

⁴ Janet van der Meulen, ‘Simon de Lille et sa commande du ‘Parfait du Paon: Pour en finir avec le “Roman de Perceforest”’, in *Patrons, Authors and Workshops: Books and Book Production in Paris around 1400*, ed. by Godfried Croenen and Peter Ainsworth (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), pp. 223–38 (p. 235).

⁵ Roussineau, ‘Introduction’, to *Première Partie, Tome I*, p. x. Christine Ferlampin-Acher, *Perceforest et Zéphir: Propositions autour d’un récit arthurien bourguignon* (Geneva: Droz, 2010) situates the *Perceforest* in this context; Armstrong and Kay, p. 53 shows this approach gaining ground in broader discussions.

⁶ Taylor, *Perceforest*, pp. 11–14; for a view on *Perceforest* as a product of the Burgundian court, see Ferlampin-Acher’s *Perceforest et Zéphir*, pp. 16–19.

⁷ On the Spanish translation, see Ian Michael, ‘The Spanish *Perceforest*: a recent discovery’, in *Studies in Medieval Literature and Languages: In Memory of Frederick Whitehead*, ed. by W. Rothwell, W. R. J. Barron, David Blamires and Lewis Thorpe (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1973), pp. 209–18.

[In order to put a hidden story about a noble king who once reigned in Great Britain into writing in the language of France, I thus want to undertake this task, by which this story will come to be known by all good men who will wish to undertake to read it. As for the reason why the story was hidden amongst the Britons' deeds and revoked, and how the god of prowess and chivalry brought it from Britain across the sea, you will learn this at the start of the story that I promise to tell you.]

The writer claims to translate the story of events that have been forgotten and presents this book as a hidden part of the history of 'tous preudhommes', who can read the 'langage de France', whether in France or Britain. The language of the text is associated with the language of the territory of France; the writer does not claim it as his own language, but rather as that of this territory, which is not mentioned again within the text. The text's language is thus presented as a *monolangue*, a language of the other, and as such, the writer suggests that in common with the earlier fictional versions of the story, posited later in the text, the language into which he is translating remains foreign to him. The fictional provenance of the text – from Britain – raises questions about locating origins from inside or outside linguistic or territorial boundaries, which are echoed throughout the narrative. A particularly suggestive way of thinking about ambiguous points of origin is articulated by Julia Kristeva in her *Étrangers à nous-mêmes*:

Étrangement, l'étranger nous habite: il est la face cachée de notre identité, l'espace qui ruine notre demeure, le temps où s'abîment l'entente et la sympathie. (p. 9)

The *étranger* is within us: it is a concealed part of our identity. Kristeva envisages the *étranger* both spatially and temporally: as a space which makes the home fall into ruin and as a time in which understanding decays. A translation shares some of the characteristics of the *étranger*: at once foreign and familiar, it is written in one language, but conceived in another. The 'ystoire celee' disrupts Kristeva's

‘demeure’ here by introducing a lost part of British history into the ‘langage de France’ in translation, but the book is *étrange* to Britain as well. Its language makes the idea of British history collapse too. Later, the narrator tells us that a Greek scholar ‘a traduit le livre de gregois en latin’ [has translated the book from Greek into Latin] (1.1, p. 71), the text of which a Hainaut translator put into the language of France. From the very opening of the *Roman de Perceforest*, the writer hints that he has translated from another language, perhaps beyond the reader’s capacities.

Furthermore, the translation occurs on the brink of remembered time: the entire period had been previously forgotten. In this passage, the writer promises to ‘mettre en escrit’ [put into writing] a time consigned to oblivion, because it was ‘celee’ [hidden] and ‘mise a neant’ [erased] (1.1, p. 1). Its memory only survives by a fluke, this one book. The writer highlights how history can be partially remembered, and easily lost. Kristeva remarks of the *étranger* that ‘au plus loin que remonte sa mémoire, elle est délicieusement meurtrie’ (p. 14). Her *étranger*’s very earliest memories are wounded, and thus damaged and even partial; they offer a suggestive parallel for the fragmentary stories about Britain contained in, and created by, this French book, whether taken from the existing history or contained in the newly discovered source text. With ‘délicieusement’, praise often reserved for sensations, she hints that impaired memory may provide aesthetic pleasure. Healing these wounds may entail creating new memories, for example, the fictional source. ‘Entremettre’ and ‘mettre en escrit’ could entail creating new material to transmit, especially if sources are defective.

From the outset, the *Roman de Perceforest* writer presents his translation project as retelling a time at the edge of memory and familiarity. As such, he shows continued interest in older forms of presenting textual production, even if this trope now consciously refers to this literary tradition in the ‘langage de France’ [language of France] (1.1, p. 1): fictional translation remains a compelling metaphor for textual production. He prefaces this story with a history of Britain, so that it might be recognised as such. This passage raises two questions about understanding translation in the *Roman de Perceforest*: to what extent does translation create familiarity and *étrangeté*? And therefore, to what extent is it an uncanny mode of writing?

In this chapter, I suggest that an aesthetic of translation is essential to understanding this text, which is driven by the encounter with unfamiliar languages, peoples, times and lands. Very few of the people we meet in the Britain described in the book originate from there; its language, French, is the language of Britain’s contemporary nobility, who do not descend from that territory either. This narrative of displaced persons, migrants and linguistic mobility is not, I suggest, unconnected from the text’s fascination with the topos of fictional translation. The first part of this chapter proposes that the text’s fictional transmission history is based on the foreign within the domestic, which foregrounds the text’s marvellous content. The *Roman de Perceforest*’s source text is unreadable until a Greek scholar translates it into Latin, at which point, still only a few can read it; the book must be copied and taken to Hainaut in order for the Count of Hainaut to have it translated into French. I suggest that, just as the characters within the mysterious book turn out to resemble the valorous Count

once he has the book translated, translation often marks recognition within this text; this theme is pursued in the second section of this chapter. The eponymous knight, Perceforest, initially does not recognise himself as such; when the Greek knight Betis does eventually realise that the Britons are calling him Perceforest, I propose that this moment parallels that of translation. This episode highlights the Greeks' difficulties in translating and in anticipating the cultural expectations of this unknown land: Betis's companions, the *chevaliers estranges*, express their astonishment in terms of *merveille*. Exploring the connections between this term, recognition and translation, in the light of Tzvetan Todorov's and Jacques Le Goff's work, enables me to discuss what is at stake in the *Roman de Perceforest* when the *chevaliers estranges* expect strangers and are presented repeatedly with their historically familiar enemies, the Trojans; the second section thus concludes with an analysis of the episode in which the *Roman de Perceforest* writer is perhaps most daring in exploring the connections between *merveille*, fiction and translation, as he depicts an enchanter who makes a pact with his people to believe that he is God. The final part of this chapter pursues the question of how material reproduction, authority and translation intersect, by examining two crowns, which raise questions about translation's connections with commemoration, and one of which depicts the story of Troy; these questions might also be usefully approached from a textual perspective. Through the example of the *lais*, I thus finally examine how the writer presents another form of transmission created within the fiction.

The *Roman de Perceforest* writer thus highlights the continued rewriting and reinvention of Trojan myths in relation to later histories, for example that of

Britain, right through until the fifteenth century. The Trojan material is not only rewritten as a series of exemplary narratives; it serves as an important spur to the fifteenth-century *Roman de Perceforest* writer's imagination of a lost part of British history.

Old Jokes, New Language

The *Roman de Perceforest* writer's imagination is caught by Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britannie*. Like Geoffrey, the *Perceforest* writer claims that his text is a translation from a book written in an ancient language that has recently resurfaced, and that he had desired. He presents the material from a second, recently discovered book as an interpolation; it irrupts into – and never returns to – the existing history, thus highlighting its partiality, as well as, implicitly, that of its own tales.

Mais je m'en tairay orendroit, car j'ay volenté de mettre en escript
premierement de quelles gens l'ille de la Grant Bretaigne fut premierement
habitee, et de continuer de roy en roy tant qu'en suivant l'ordonnance je viendray
au roy gentil dont j'ay vouloir de mettre en escript a l'aide de Dieu, que on doibt
en toutes oeuvres premier appeller. Et par briefz parlers, je commenceray ainsi
que je le treuve en escript d'un preudomme qui du livre de latin le translata en
nostre langaige. (1.1, p. 1)
[But I will presently be quiet, because I want first to put into writing the people
by whom Great Britain was first inhabited, and to continue from king to king
following the order, until I arrive at the noble king who I want to put into writing
with God's help, whom one must call pre-eminent in all works. And to be brief, I
shall start as I find it written down by a good man who translated it from the
Latin book into our language.]

This prologue ensures that readers identify the story as a part of an illustrious British history; for some readers, this opening could set the humorous tone of pastiche that characterises the book. The writer's playful attitude to history is exemplified by 'au roy gentil dont j'ay vouloir de mettre en escript'. This unusual formulation suggests that the writer creates that king. Although 'je le treuve en escript' indicates the narrator finding his material for copying, *trouver*'s other

meaning of creation suggests the narrator is creating this history. This meaning is clear as this structure parallels ‘mectre en escript’, which is used to describe translation just a few lines earlier. ‘Nostre langaige’ seems to refer to the ‘langage de France’ here in opposition to the ‘livre de latin’. It creates a bond between the text and its reader, and it emphasises that the writer did not expect his readers to know Latin, a language increasingly restricted to the clergy at this date.⁸ British history is written and read in its royal language, and also that of the king and queen of an allied foreign territory, Hainaut, which traded extensively with Britain. Nonetheless, this language is still identified as belonging to a third territory, that of France. Serge Lusignan observes that Londoners used ‘l’anglo-français’ for ‘correspondance avec ces centres commerciaux [de Picardie et de Flandre]’ in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and I suggest, Hainaut.⁹ Equally, he notes of Britain:

beaucoup de gens au sein de la *gentry* rurale et de la bourgeoisie urbaine [possédaient] une connaissance suffisante du français.¹⁰

I would suggest that at least a similar situation existed at the French-speaking court of Hainaut: Jane Gilbert points out the rich French literary culture present in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹¹ She further notes that within the *Roman de Perceforest*, Britain

permeated by the marvels of the orient, becomes exotic and mysterious, a place of conquests and hybridities.¹²

⁸ *Langue des Rois*, pp. 103-4.

⁹ *Langue des Rois*, p. 178.

¹⁰ *Langue des Rois*, p. 178.

¹¹ Jane Gilbert, ‘Chapter 3: Valenciennes’, in *A Literary History of Europe*, ed. by David Wallace (forthcoming).

¹² ‘Valenciennes’.

The text's language does not originate in Britain and is spoken by only a small proportion of the population; indeed, the imaginary Greek invasion in the *Roman de Perceforest* perhaps resembles the Norman invasion more than any other historical event. Its foreign language pre-empted the text's marvellous content, and creates a Britain far more exotic than one might expect from its geographical position in relation to Hainaut. Both the part of Book One copied from a translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and the larger hidden part of British history, which occupies the remaining five books and some of Book One, have exotic source texts that the writer does not identify, though the text's content remains equally foreign in relation to its language.

Although the source text for part of Book One is identifiable as the *Historia Regum Britannie*, because the *Roman de Perceforest* is entirely in French, it is unlikely that a reader would seek out that source text, especially since the writer tells the reader most of the story anyway. Though some readers would surely have recognised this copy of a translation as such, some would not. If readers of the *Roman de Perceforest* did know the 'livre du latin' [the Latin book] (1.1, p. 1), they might have observed that the *Perceforest* is far larger than the entire *Historia Regum Britannie*, which might itself be read as a humorous text. It highlights its most outlandish stories: the apocalyptic *Prophetiae Merlini* circulated before the larger text, and enjoyed great success.¹³ Geoffrey's contemporary William of Newburgh dismissed it, for example, as an 'impudent

¹³ *Prophetiae Merlini*, pp. 145-59, paras. 111-17; see Reeve, 'Introduction', to *The History of the Kings of Britain*, pp. viii-ix on this text's status and success.

fabrication'.¹⁴ Readers might equally wryly remember that the passage – discussed in the Introduction – which provides the inspiration for this one claims that Geoffrey's text too is a translation of another fictional source, 'Britannici sermonis librum uetustissimum' [a very old book in the British tongue] (Prologue, para. 2, ll. 9-10). Louis-Fernand Flutre sees this passage in the *Roman de Perceforest* as an authorial attempt to 'authentifier son oeuvre'.¹⁵ However, the authority for the text is transferred to a lost book from the start, a parody of other widely disseminated texts set in a distant past, including the *Roman de Troie* and the *Historia Regum Britannie*.

When the writer reaches the beginning of the period in which Britain was ruled by Perceforest – a double joke, given that both the *Historia Regum Britannie* and the *Roman de Perceforest* are fictions – he presents a detailed account of how the 'ystoire celee' [hidden story] (1.1, p. 1) was found, translated from Greek into Latin, copied, and then translated into French.¹⁶ Joëlle Ducos notes that Latin was the 'langue de médiation' for all Greek and Arabic texts eventually put into French in the medieval period: the *Roman de Perceforest* story therefore follows plausible patterns of translation.¹⁷ It goes unread for ten years after having been found. Appropriately, the first translator of this book is an 'exotic' exile:¹⁸

Il a ore ung an qu'il arriva au port de Hanstonne une nef de Grece. En celle nef avoit ung clerc gregoiz qui en ce paÿs venoit pour aprendre de philozophie selon le latin, car en ce estoit a l'estude a Paris, mais plus demourer n'y pouoit pour ung homicide. Et tant fiz depuis a cellui clerc qu'il m'a translaté le livre de gregoiz en latin, car riens ne sçavoit de breton. (1.1, pp. 70-1)

¹⁴ Damian-Grint, pp. 45-8.

¹⁵ Louis-Fernand Flutre, 'Études sur le *Roman de Perceforest*', *Romania*, 71 (1950), 374-92 (p. 374).

¹⁶ On this fiction in Geoffrey of Monmouth, see Damian-Grint, p. 48.

¹⁷ Joëlle Ducos, 'Traduction', in *Translations médiévales*, ed. by Galderisi, p. 141.

¹⁸ *Postcolonial Fictions*, p. 9.

[A year ago, a ship from Greece arrived at the port of Southampton. In this ship, there was a Greek clerk who was coming to this country to learn philosophy according to the Latin, because he was studying this at Paris, but he was unable to stay there any longer because of a murder. And I subsequently did so much for that clerk that he has translated the book for me from Greek into Latin, because he didn't know any British.]

A present-day retracing of *translatio studii* is required in order for the book to be translated. The Greek scholar is foreign: he is away from Greece, he is estranged from his Parisian community, and his deed might make others afraid of him. He has come to Britain, and embarks on translating a manuscript – presumably, producing a Latin copy – himself. What seems utterly unfamiliar at first turns out to be recognisable to him: this text of great domestic importance could never have been transmitted without this foreigner's translation into Latin. This movement – between foreign and familiar – opens up questions about the aesthetic effects of translation. Sigmund Freud defined his 'uncanny' as 'that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar'.¹⁹ He identifies it as that which moves from evoking fear to become something familiar and well-known for a long period of time. As Freud attempts to 'proceed beyond the equation "uncanny" = "unfamiliar"' (p. 221), he shows that something might indeed be both familiar – from the Latin *familia*, within the household – and able to cause fear. Although his definition does not explicitly mention translation, Freud undoubtedly had it in mind when writing 'The Uncanny'. He opens his essay with a series of definitions of *unheimlich* drawn from other European languages, including Latin and Greek. He notes that Italian and Portuguese do not

¹⁹ Sigmund Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XVII: 1917-1919: An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, 24 vols, ed. and trans. by James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1955), XVII, pp. 217-56 (p. 220). Further references are given in parentheses within the text by page number.

have this word, but also observes that ‘the dictionaries that we consult tell us nothing new, perhaps only because we ourselves speak a language that is foreign’ (p. 221). With his anticipation of Derrida’s ‘je n’ai qu’une langue, or ce n’est pas la mienne’, Freud uses the slippage between multiple languages in order to highlight that familiar languages are foreign – and elusive – too.²⁰ Indeed, the Greek scholar’s translation still retains much of its source’s foreignness, as its audience struggles with his Latin, and study at Paris is associated primarily here with philosophy ‘selon le latin’, that is the intellectually exclusive scholastic traditions. Greek may be an ancient language, but it is no longer familiar in Britain: as the text is discovered in Britain, translated into Latin and then copied and moved to Hainaut, it therefore becomes uncanny. This foreigner – and outlaw – is closer to understanding this hidden and foreign-language account of a lost British time than anyone around him. Crucially, he is able to decipher the domestic for the British, to whom it looks foreign.

After the wedding of Edward, king of England and the daughter of the King of France, Guillaume, Count of Hainaut, decides to visit England for the first time. One night, he stays in Wortimer Abbey (1.1, p. 69). The abbot shows him a fourteen-foot-thick wall and tells him how he found the book:

Veoir pouez ceste aumaire qui est dedens ce mur. Par ma foy, elle estoit au dehors sellee de mur si subtillement qu’il n’estoit vivant qui percevoir s’en peust. Mais quant les ouvriers l’eurent trouuee d’aventure, qui cy endroit vouloient faire ung huys, ilz me manderent, car mectre ne vouloient les mains aux joyaulx qui estoient pardedens, au dessus de l’autel que veoir poez. Et sachiez qu’il y avoit ung livre de cronicques en la moienne et par dessus avoit une couronne d’or moult riche appartenant a roy. (1.1, p. 70)

²⁰ *Monolinguisme*, p. 15.

[You can see this cupboard which is inside this wall. By my faith, it was sealed from the outside in the wall so subtly, that there wasn't a man alive who could have perceived it. But when the workers found it by chance, the men who wanted to make a door in this place sent for me, because they didn't want to put their hands on the jewels which were inside, above the altar that you can see. And know that there was a book of chronicles in the middle and above there was a very rich crown of gold, belonging to a king.]

This book is glitzy and mysterious. The workers who find the physical book immediately pass it over to the abbot, who cannot 'sçavoir en quel langage il est escript' [know in which language it is written] (1.1, p. 70). Two parts of Freud's full definition of *unheimlich*, taken from a German dictionary, are suggestive in relation to the fictional location of the *Roman de Perceforest*'s source text:

1. (c) Intimate, friendlily (sic) comfortable; the enjoyment of quiet content, etc., arousing a sense of agreeable restfulness and security, as one within the four walls of his house. (p. 221)
2. Concealed, kept from sight, so that others do not get to know of or about it, withheld from others. (p. 222)

These illuminate the significance of this passage: the 'ystoire celee' [hidden story] (1.1, p. 1) is kept within a wall, but not entirely within the abbey and it is hidden from everyone for years. The location of the book is therefore both strange and familiar to the abbot, as he did not expect it to be there, even though it had been there for a long time. In this way, the physical book symbolises the status of the text it contains: present but inaccessible, because it is unreadable and untranslatable.²¹ Both the abbot and the workers are able to recognise the book as having great importance, thanks to its accompanying symbols of spiritual and secular power, an altar and a crown, but they cannot read it because of its

²¹ See Sylvia Huot, 'Chronicle, Lai, Romance: Orality and Writing in the *Roman de Perceforest*', in *Vox Intexta: Orality and Textuality in the Middle Ages*, ed. by A. N. Doane and Carol Braun Pasternack (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), pp. 203-23 (p. 206).

unfamiliar language, which only someone foreign to them – but familiar with it – can translate.

However, the fictional transmission of this book is not over. The abbot laments that the scholar does not know any ‘Breton’ (1.1, p. 70): he might have preferred the book in a vernacular. The Greek’s scholarly erudition is in fact insufficient for the text to reach a wider fictional audience, including an ideal reader whose biography as told in the *Roman de Perceforest* resembles that of the characters. Serge Lusignan notes that ‘le latin était perçu comme la langue universelle et stable comprise par tous les clercs’, but its dominance as an administrative language was increasingly challenged by French throughout the later Middle Ages, which were equally marked by growth in the production of French literature.²² He notes, for example, that Enguerran de Marigny (1260-1315), Philippe IV’s chamberlain, had all his Latin deeds translated into French.²³ Furthermore, he notes that the two languages co-existed for administrative purposes throughout the fifteenth century:

le choix de la langue en fonction de la nature de l’acte persiste tout au long du XV^e siècle [...] On ne peut manquer de remarquer que la plupart des actes pour lesquels la langue savante était d’usage se caractérisent par leur forme extrêmement stéréotypée.²⁴

Only the patron of its second translation, Guillaume, Count of Hainaut, leads the story back to ‘what is known of old and long familiar’ (p. 220), because Greek and Latin have been largely forgotten in this French-speaking part of the world. What is familiar to a Greek native speaker is not so to a French speaker from Hainaut. In fact, the text itself contains Greek-speaking characters in a curiously

²² *Langue des Rois*, p. 20.

²³ *Langue des Rois*, p. 101.

²⁴ *Langue des Rois*, p. 126.

French romance setting. The foreign, it seems, may even anticipate the traditions with which the reader is familiar, and pose as prehistory.²⁵

However, Guillaume too is neither British nor French, but from the French-speaking court of Hainaut, formed in 1299. This patron and his circle – as well as the *Roman de Perceforest*'s readers – are principally familiar with the three-hundred-year-old French vernacular tradition into which *Perceforest* is inserted. The abbot recommends the book to Guillaume as

tresdelectable a oïr, car elle est tresaventureuse en chevalerie ne il n'est chevalier nulz, s'il l'a leue, qu'il n'en vaille mieux. (1.1, p. 71)

[very delightful to hear, because it is very adventurous in chivalry, nor is there a single knight, if he has read it, who would not be more worthy for it.]

Nonetheless, the count's wish to read the book brings up language and conservation problems:

Je vous pryé, par courtoisie, que j'en puisse faire lire ung petit a mon clerc, car j'entens ung pou de latin, et le remanant luy feray exposer en françois. – Sire, dist l'abbé, je le feray pour ce que vous estes estrange, car je ne voudroie pas qu'il fust encore leu en ce pays, si l'avray fait copier par plusieurs parties, car legierement pourroie perdre l'original. (1.1, p. 71)

[I ask you, by courtesy, that I may have a little of it read by my clerk, because I understand a bit of Latin, and the remainder I will have him translate/gloss in French. – Sir, the abbot said, I will do it because you are a foreigner, because I would not want it to be read yet in this country, before I have had it copied by several scribes, because I could easily lose the original.]

This passage illuminates the count's capacities in Latin and French. Lusignan notes that the political treatise *La Réponse d'un bon et loyal Français* rebukes the English for using Latin for their offer of a peace treaty in 1419, when they knew that the French king 'ignorait cette langue', and also points to a treatise written in 1446 for the king, in which the writer, Jean Juvénal des Ursins, 'traduit

²⁵ See Taylor, 'Guerre', in *Guerres, voyages et quêtes*, ed. by Labbé, Lacroix and Queruel, pp. 413-420, (pp. 413-14, p. 420); *Perceforest et Zéphir*, pp. 19-86 on possible influences for the *Perceforest*.

systématiquement les multiples citations latines'.²⁶ The count's claim to understand a bit of Latin but to require French glossing or indeed translation might thus be read as indicative of his preference for French, and may even be a face-saving measure: he can understand formulaic Latin, but, as Lusignan observes of the fifteenth-century kings of France, he was 'nettement plus à l'aise en français'.²⁷ In addition to obscuring the count's relative fluency in Latin and French, 'le remanant' suggests that the French parts are in excess. The Greek clerk's Latin may be of such a different order to the count's that the remainder – that which cannot be carried across in Latin – must be glossed in French.²⁸

Furthermore, 'exposer' carries a range of meaning from translation, through glossing, to explanation. It derives from the prefix *ex-* and an etymology, which mixes up *ponere* (to put) with *pausare* (to rest or to lay down), from which we get the French *poser* (*OED*). This etymology suggests putting something out or even bringing it to light. This dynamic image of removal recalls other Old French words, which signify translation, including *retraire* and *traire* (to pull out) and *translater* (to carry across). The *DMF* offers several definitions for 'exposer', one of which is 'présenter par le discours'. One of its fifteenth-century examples, taken from a playwright at the Burgundian court where the *Perceforest*

²⁶ *Langue des Rois*, p. 130, p. 131.

²⁷ *Langue des Rois*, p. 131.

²⁸ Nicole Pons, 'Latin et français au XV^e siècle: le témoignage des traités de propagande', in *Actes du V^e Colloque international sur le moyen français*, ed. by Sergio Cigada and Anna Slerca, 2 vols (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1986), II, pp. 67-81 demonstrates clerks consciously attempting to promote classical Latin, which implies French's growing dominance in courts.

manuscripts were produced, indicates a possible meaning of translation or glossing.²⁹

De laquelle les fais et oeuvres, pour ce que on ne les puelit bonnement nommer en llatin ne exposer en françoiz, les acteurs les nomment en prononciacion greque, c'est assavoir estranagemens.³⁰
[From which the deeds and works, because one could not name them well in Latin nor translate/gloss them in French, the actors name them in Greek pronunciation, that is to say, strangely.]

As in the quotation from the *Roman de Perceforest*, Greek occupies a position of the original but now unfamiliar – and even uncanny – language, in opposition to the readily understandable French, which is apt for supplementing another language, whether through glossing or translation.

The meanings of ‘exposer’ as translation and explanation could well be read ironically in the context of the *Perceforest* quotation. If collective memory was complete, then the book would not require explaining or glossing: the Greek book offers nothing more than stories of British history, the place where the book is being translated and where it was found. Stories that fit into the *Historia Regum Britannie*, already three hundred years old, have been forgotten. Nationality and language are foreign to each other here, as the book’s ideal reader, the Count, is not British and he cannot speak the book’s language, so the abbot agrees to ‘exposer’ the remainder for him.

The Count is a keen bilingual reader. In having the foreign book translated, he makes it easier to use. He does not speak at least the language the abbot would have liked for the translation, but he is ‘le plus preux des Crestiens’

²⁹ On the links between de la Sale and the *Roman de Perceforest*, see Ferlampin-Acher, *Perceforest et Zéphir*, pp. 78-80.

³⁰ Antoine de la Sale, *Oeuvres Complètes: Tome 1: La Salade*, ed. by Fernand Desonay (Paris: Droz, 1935), p. 36.

[the bravest of Christians] (p. 72). In this way, he foreshadows the intra-diegetic characters, visitors who do not speak the language of Britain either and who are similarly valorous in the service of a proto-Christianity.³¹ The Count turns out to be far less foreign to the book itself than first appears from his origins and language: an area very like Hainaut is repeatedly fictionalised – and defamiliarised – throughout the book as the *Selve Carbonniere*, a Frenchification of the Latin name for the dense forest that stretched across modern-day Belgium, *Silva Carbonaria*. Indeed, Christine Ferlampin-Acher has suggested that the writer's aim is to 'intégrer au monde arthurien les possessions du comte de Hainaut'.³² Translating an unfamiliar Greek book turns out to reveal adventures that are very similar to your own. His chivalry, the same as that of Perceforest's lineage, may explain why he is so interested in getting the book into his language, and the most generically appropriate language at that time, French, famed for Arthurian romance.³³ French thus subsumes all other languages within this book. The abbot may not want the book to be read in Britain until it has been copied, but the source text has already been usurped; the original to which he refers is the Greek clerk's Latin translation, since the abbot could not find anyone else to translate the Greek text.

³¹ See Anne Berthelot, 'La Grande Bretagne comme terre étrange/ère: le tourisme d'Alexandre dans le *Roman de Perceforest*', in *Diesseits- und Jenseitsreisen im Mittelalter*, ed. by Wolf-Dieter Lange (Bonn: Bouvier, 1992), pp. 11-23.

³² Christine Ferlampin-Acher, 'La Géographie et les progrès de la civilisation dans *Perceforest*', in *Provinces, régions, terroirs au Moyen Âge: de la réalité à l'imaginaire – Actes du colloque international des rencontres européennes de Strasbourg, 19-21 septembre 1991*, ed. by Bernard Guidot (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1993), pp. 275-90 (p. 286).

³³ On the role of *Perceforest* as a prehistory and its fictional target audience's language, see *Postcolonial Fictions*, p. 9.

Finally, the book is removed from Britain to Hainaut. The Count asks a monk

que de cest oeuvre se vouldist entremectre et le conseillier. [...] Le conte luy bailla le livre pour mectre l'oeuvre a fin par luy ou par aultruy. (1.1, p. 72).
[that he might like to intervene in this work and advise him. The Count gave him the book to finish the work, whether himself or by someone else.]

‘Entremectre’ and ‘conseillier’ together highlight the translator’s importance as a mediator within this process, before a reader decides to ‘[s]’entremectre’ too, as the earlier prologue suggests. The book takes a long time to appear in French. Translation is again framed as an auxiliary mode in ‘conseillier’, advising or guiding, but this idea contrasts with that in ‘mectre [...] a fin’. Translation is both a supplement to the original and a replacement of that original text.

Thus the *Roman de Perceforest* writer presents translation as a process of imagining a language that is part of British history. This process is fraught: the failure to recognise correctly – or at all – animates the story within the discovered book, the text we read. In the light of this analysis, I would therefore like to suggest that translation acts here as a form of linguistic recognition of the possible overlap between our own identity and that of another, by drawing on Terence Cave’s definition of recognition in relation to Aristotle’s *anagnorisis*:

In Aristotle’s definition, anagnorisis brings about a shift from ignorance to knowledge; it is the moment at which the characters understand their predicament fully for the first time, the moment that resolves a series of unexplained and often implausible occurrences; it makes the world (and the text) intelligible. Yet it is also a shift *into* the implausible: the secret unfolded lies beyond the realm of common experience; the truth discovered is ‘marvellous’ (*thaumaston*, to use Aristotle’s term), the truth of fabulous myth or legend. Anagnorisis conjoins the recovery of knowledge with a disquieting sense, when the trap is sprung, that the commonly accepted co-ordinates of knowledge have gone away.³⁴

³⁴ Terence Cave, *Recognitions: A Study in Poetics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 1-2. Further references are given in parentheses within the text by page number.

In the most basic sense, translation too is a shift from ignorance to knowledge, on the part of the translator: he wants to tell the reader about British history, and its aim is to make another language, and texts within that language, intelligible. Cave remarks that Freud's

dazzling analysis of the etymology and semantics of the words *heimlich* and *unheimlich* is curiously suggestive of the ambivalences of anagnorisis. (p. 172)

He further notes

the coming to light of this hidden familiarity will produce an effect of shock or horror; even the comic and romance versions, where the familiar is happily restored, produce this effect because what has happened is disturbingly *unfamiliar*, and the averted threat – or rather the warping effect itself – may still leave its reverberations in the denouement. One might also say that the doublet *heimlich/unheimlich* evokes the 'folded' character of Aristotle's complex plots, the co-presence of an overt and a hidden story. (p. 172)

Cave's remarks on recognition's capacity to disrupt are enlightening in terms of how the *Perceforest* writer portrays the process of translation: episodes of translation frequently confront characters, and situations, with texts and languages initially beyond their understanding, or that might be elusive, like Geoffrey of Monmouth's source text. The processes of translation may well be fraught and surprising, as the prologue to *Perceforest* shows only too well. Translation, by definition, makes the commonly-accepted co-ordinates of knowledge – language, grammar, syntax – relative, by gesturing towards an equally plausible but often mysterious and unfamiliar alternative, which has existed prior to that language.

(Mis)Recognitions

I could not have written this chapter without Sylvia Huot's book *Postcolonial Fictions*. Her analysis of the presentation of cultural identity, territory and power relations in the *Roman de Perceforest* will not be superseded. However, she does

not interrogate the question of language as a marker of foreignness, and so although my analysis has her postcolonial approach to the text as its point of departure, its focus is somewhat different.

For the *Roman de Perceforest* writer, a moment of recognition – which sometimes contains misrecognition within it – marks translation. For example, acquiring a new British name inscribes the new king, Betis, a *chevalier estrange*, within existing prophecies and thus cements his position. At first, however, he does not understand this:

Dame, foy que vous me devez, qu'est ce a dire que vous me clamez roy
Perceforest? (1.1, p. 149)
[Lady, by the faith you owe me, what does it mean for you to be calling me king
Perceforest?]

The lady explains how the previous usurper-king, Darnant, had asked for a prophecy of his death, and was told that Perceforest would kill him. Therefore, he was unconcerned about fighting Betis because he was not called Perceforest. After this prophecy,

estoit son nom plus désiré et plus nommé que autres noms pour le desirer de sa
mort veoir. (1.1, p. 150)
[his [Perceforest's] name was more desired and more named than other names for
the desire to see him [Darnant] dead.]

Perceforest is not a translation of Betis: as Jacques Derrida notes, a proper noun 'n'appartient pas rigoureusement, au même titre que les autres mots, à la langue, au système de la langue, qu'elle soit traduite ou traduisante'.³⁵ The two separate systems of meaning clash: despite the appearance of translation or equivalence, there is only rupture between these two names. The first deed Betis performs after having been crowned king of Britain and England by his own lord, Alexandre,

³⁵ 'Tours de Babel', p. 208.

enables him to be recognised as the rightful king according to an existing British prophecy, within a distinct verbal and historical setting. Although his name is not translated, his new name records his triumph in penetrating and gaining the mysterious, dangerous forests. Once the lady has explained the prophecy, Betis realises their excessive misrecognition of him, and quickly accedes to his new name. When he meets the lady who tells him the prophecies he has fulfilled, but fails initially to respond to the name she calls him, he and she both recognise at once his foreignness and his domestic importance. Julia Kristeva comments on how these moments of recognising alterity can prove unsettling:

Face à l'étranger que je refuse et auquel je m'identifie à la fois, je perds mes limites, je n'ai plus de contenant. (p. 276)

Betis guesses from the lady's story that she may be his (usurping) predecessor's wife, and therefore the former queen. Though he does not seem troubled by being recognised with a new name by his dead precursor's wife, he is confronted with a phantom double: Perceforest. He sidesteps the question of his name to emphasise the position which links him with that line of kings: 'Bien vray est que je suy roy d'Angleterre heritablement' [It is true that I am the hereditary king of England] (1.1, p. 152). Of course, he did not inherit the title, but he stakes out future tradition by suggesting that his heirs will do so. From this episode onwards, Betis is referred to as Perceforest. This replacement of his name resembles the process of translation, but is distinct. His former identity is superseded within the text; reference is never made to it again. Patrick Mahony notes that Freud used the word 'Übersetzung' for 'transposition', including "successive registrations" representing "the psychic achievement of successive epochs of life. At the boundary between two such epochs a translation of the psychic material must take

place””.³⁶ Betis gains a new name shortly after leaving his comrades to enter the forest, and by implication, a new, unknown British culture. A new British identity slowly follows his new name.

Whereas Betis did not flinch – at first – at the Britons attributing a pre-existing identity to him, his comrades, the *chevaliers estranges* (here Alexandre and Floridas), display astonishment.

“Par ma foy, dist le roy a Floridas, je voy merveilles. Nous sçavons de certain que Betis de Fezon est roy d’Angleterre et sy veons cy qu’on l’appelle Percheforest.
– Par ma foy, dist Floridas, j’ay grant merveille.” (1.1, p. 200)
[By my faith, the king [Alexandre] said to Floridas, I see marvels. We know for certain that Betis de Fezon is king of England and yet here we see that he’s being called Perceforest.
– By my faith, Floridas said, I’m marvelling greatly.]

Alexandre divides their confusion into existing knowledge, of which they can be certain, and new, contradictory information, which unsettles that prior knowledge: the king’s British name no longer appears to be that under which Alexandre crowned him King of England. His repetition of ‘merveille’ might be read in the light of Jacques Le Goff’s remarks on the etymology of *mirabilia* in *mir* (as in *miror*, *mirari*). He suggests that

à l’origine il y a cette référence à l’oeil qui me paraît importante, parce que tout un imaginaire peut s’ordonner autour de cet appel à un sens, celui de la vision, et d’une série d’images et de métaphores visuelles [...] On est ainsi conduit à faire un rapprochement particulièrement pertinent pour l’Occident médiéval entre *mirari*, *mirabilia* (merveille) et *miroir* (bien que traduit en latin par *speculum* mais la langue vernaculaire rétablit des parentés) et tout ce qu’un imaginaire et une idéologie du miroir peuvent représenter.³⁷

This set of images is clear in Alexandre’s presentation of the problem, using ‘voy’ and ‘veons’. Alexandre is familiar with Betis as a *chevalier estrange*, but his new

³⁶ Freud quoted in Patrick Mahony, ‘Freud and Translation’, *American Imago*, 58 (2001), 837-40 (p. 837).

³⁷ Jacques Le Goff, *L’Imaginaire Médiéval* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), p. 18.

domestic identity as Perceforest is foreign to him: the visual explanation – that Perceforest is physically different – cannot be the case, and so Alexandre is transported into marvelling. His astonishment perhaps articulates the reader's earlier response more clearly than Betis's kingly calm. The prophecy is unusual within romance: first, it is told in unmetaphorical, non-allegorical prose; second, rather than bearing a 'heavy strain of the enigmatic', it names the one who will fulfil it.³⁸ So Betis's acceptance of his new name shows an amusingly pragmatic approach to this prophecy.

By now, however, the joke is already on Alexandre and Floridas, whose surprise only retrospectively parallels that of the reader. Betis's new name has been explained and the narrator has been calling him Perceforest for some time. Their 'grant merveille' is comic. In 1970, Tzvetan Todorov used the cognate substantive 'merveilleux' to theorise one possible outcome of the 'fantastique', which 'ne dure que le temps d'une hésitation: hésitation commune au lecteur et au personnage, qui doivent décider si ce qu'ils perçoivent relève ou non de la "réalité", telle qu'elle existe pour l'opinion commune'.³⁹ In this way in the *Roman de Perceforest*, the reader shares this moment of hesitation with Betis, but the timelapse renders Alexandre's surprise comic. Todorov's examples for three out of four of his subcategories of the *merveilleux* are drawn from a medieval text in translation, the *Thousand and One Nights*, in Antoine Galland's eighteenth-century version.⁴⁰ His *merveilleux exotique* is the most relevant to this discussion:

³⁸ Helen Cooper, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the death of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 189 lists characteristics of prophetic language.

³⁹ Tzvetan Todorov, *Introduction à la littérature fantastique* (Paris: Seuil, 1970), p. 46.

⁴⁰ Todorov, pp. 60-1.

On rapporte ici des événements surnaturels sans les présenter comme tels; le receuteur implicite de ces contes est censé ne pas connaître les régions où se déroulent les événements; par conséquent il n'a pas de raisons de les mettre en doute.⁴¹

Todorov's commentary perhaps opens up this episode well because he is examining translations of medieval texts which also claim to have been dictated orally, and some of which claim to have been translated (some versions of Marco Polo). His 'rapporte' is crucial, as the stance of retelling – including translating, in the cases of Galland and the *Roman de Perceforest* – enables all kinds of fictions to be told and retold without detriment to either narrator or reader. The 'receuteur implicite', whether one of two fictional translators, fictional copyists or the fictional patron in the *Roman de Perceforest*, does not voice his doubt either. Like Alexandre, nearly all those who transmit the work are visiting, or newly arrived in, Britain. Even for those who do know the country, such as the abbot, the *Roman de Perceforest* was written so long ago that its language is no longer read in Britain.

Within the text, the language characters speak is important in enabling recognition and possibly furthering translation. The Britons give Betis a new name drawn from his (inadvertent) place in British folklore, thus implying that his other name is foreign by comparison. In an episode sensitive to the subtleties of locating someone through their language, one wise man – who is living in Britain – confirms who the *chevaliers estranges* are by their language's resemblance to Greek.

- Mais dictes moy dont vous estes, après m'avisera.
- Certes, sire, dist le roy, nous sommes chevaliers estranges.

⁴¹ Todorov, p. 60.

- Ce m'est bien avis, dist la personne, car vous parleriez bien gregoiz, se vous vouliez. Vostre langue le sent.
 - Par ma foy, dist le roy, vous dictes voir, car je fuz nez ou païs et tous mes compaignons d'assez pres. (1.1, p. 193)
- [– But tell me where you are from, after, I'll think about it. – Of course, sir, said the king, we are foreign knights. – That's certainly what I think, the person said, because you would indeed speak Greek, if you wanted to. You can tell from your tongue/language. – By my faith, said the king, you speak truthfully, because I was born in the country, and all my companions were born quite nearby.]

The manuscripts offer 'parler' in the conditional and the present tenses. MSS B and C read 'parleriez'/'parleriés', which makes the tense usage regular within the 'se' clause, and suggests that the language that the *chevaliers* are speaking is akin to Greek. The wise man thus identifies their language as not the same, but perhaps related to Greek; such a linguistic lack of homogeneity is discussed from a theoretical standpoint in the Introduction. MS E has 'parlez' here, which flattens out this possibility, as the wise man then simply identifies their language as Greek. It is likely that they are speaking some language related to Greek and that this inhabitant of Britain can understand them: later in the text, the temple where this scene takes place turns out to be presided over by the Trojan Pergamon, Cassandra's wise man. This man, therefore, is his servant, so it is extremely likely that he too might speak Greek or a related language; as discussed later in the chapter, in *Perceforest*, some of the Trojan descendants speak an older form of Greek. The manuscript variants indicate that the process of recognition is central to this story, and differences in language are vital to this identification.

The *Perceforest* writer further links language and prophecy in a recognition scene: the foreign unsettles Alexandre's knowledge by revealing that he may understand less about his domestic affairs in Greece than he thought. The wise man first shows that he knows the knights' origins by locating their language; Alexandre's exclamation marks his surprise again at the wise man's

cosmopolitanism. However, the wise man tersely remarks that if Alexandre and his men had been from the Lignaige Darnant – the previous rulers of England – he would not have opened the door to them, but he does not reveal his own Trojan links. These two share a heritage and a language, but Alexandre is so concerned to find an exotic Britain that he misses cues of familiarity. These clues show that the domestic may inhere in the foreign, and the foreign in the domestic. For example, he fails to spot this wise man, who came to Britain along with many other Greek speakers, as a Trojan. The *chevaliers estranges*' name looks self-imposed – and amusingly self-congratulatory – in this diverse Britain full of Greek-speaking exiles. Later, the wise man prophesies to Alexandre about the 'parties de Grece' [parts of Greece] (1.1, p. 195), which Alexandre finds a 'merveille' again (1.1, p. 195, p. 198). He is constantly surprised at how well the British know him. For this implicit Greek speaker living in Britain, Alexandre is not *estranged*. Just as the British inhabitants knew Perceforest was coming, so does this wise man advise Alexandre with a prophecy on Greece's political fortunes.

The Greeks are not the only foreigners in Britain, and they repeatedly meet their historic rivals and neighbours, the Trojans. This sporadic, fragmentary series of migrations highlights the ease with which a people's power and culture may shift or even disappear. Their journeys do not represent a single movement of *translatio imperii*: although Pergamon brings learning to Britain, for other Trojans, their conditions in exile mean that both their identity as a people and their learning are lost. Despite all the Trojans in Britain having made the same journey (or being descended from those who did), Troy lies on the brink of these British inhabitants' memory. Not all the Trojan descendants know of their

heritage, even though the fall of Troy is within exaggerated living memory – for the four-hundred-year old Dardanon (1.1, p. 355, p. 358) – and continues elsewhere within oral memory.

Thus the *chevaliers estranges* are only the most recent Mediterranean settlers in this newly-inhabited land; Dardanon remembers Cassandra and the Trojans defending themselves against the giants (1.1, p. 356). The *chevaliers estranges* do not mention their ancestry, and they could even be of Trojan descent, since writers often say that the Trojans spoke and wrote in Greek (Dares Phrygius, para. 44; Benoît de Sainte-Maure, l. 92; Guido delle Colonne, p. 4; *deuxième mise en prose du Roman de Troie*, fol. 1r).

Gadiffer, King of Scotland, and his knights travel around the country receiving fealty from the people. The *chevaliers estranges* expect the native Britons to be completely foreign to them.⁴² After not meeting anyone for days, they see that

il y avoit vaches domestez et couroient entre elles enfans de .X. ans et de .XII. ans tous nudz, fors qu'ilz estoient envelopez de peaulx de moutons. (2.1, p. 5)
[there were domesticated cows, and children between ten and twelve years of age ran between them; the children were completely naked, except for being wrapped in sheepskins.]

The writer adopts the knights' perspective here: the children's animal-skin clothing leads him to observe that, as the knights approach, the children flee, 'criant et breant comme se ce fussent cerfz ramaiges' [crying and braying as if there were wild deer] (2.1, p. 5). The knights first distinguish them as children, even if they think their behaviour perhaps more resembles that of animals. One of the knights, Estonné, grabs a child whose animal skin has fallen off while running

⁴² See *Postcolonial Fictions*, pp. 27-8 for analysis of this scene's power dynamics.

away. He observes that she is ‘de sy beaux membres et de sy belles factures que c’estoit une merveille a regarder’ [of such beautiful limbs and making that it was a marvel to look at] (2.1, p. 6). Discovering such beauty provokes voyeuristic wonder in Estonné: to him, her body seems inexplicable, especially in this rustic setting.

This child is the touchstone for the knights’ recognition of this people, of which Estonné’s ‘mervoille’ at her body is the first step. The king starts to interrogate her, but she

crioit après son pere et sa mere en une maniere de parler descongneu, car elle avoit la langue gregoise sy changee que envis l’entendoit le roy et les chevaliers qui lez luy estoit. (2.1, p. 6)
[cried after her father and mother in a way of speaking that was no longer known, because she spoke the Greek language in such a changed way that the king and the knights who were near him understood her with great difficulty.]

Desconnoistre opens up the politics of recognition in such a seeming translation zone. Its double meaning of ‘jem. kennen, erkennen’ and ‘jem. (oder etw.) nicht (er)kennen’ [not to recognise/know of someone (or something)] suggests that although the *chevaliers estranges* can understand the rural language, which is, after all, a variant of their own, it is, at the same time, unfamiliar.⁴³ Here, the domestic resides in a foreign setting: a people who dress in animal skins in the wilderness speak an accented (and presumably dialectal) variant of the *chevaliers’* own language. Their own language, therefore, appears unrecognisably foreign to them.

The Greeks do not expect to find their language in such an unfamiliar physical and linguistic setting: Tobler-Lommatzsch defines two other possible meanings for *desconnoistre* as ‘jem. nicht anerkennen, jem. abschwören,

⁴³ *TL*, II (1936), col. 1523, l. 36, ll. 48-9.

verleugnen' [not to recognise someone; renounce, disown someone] and 'sich unkenntlich machen' [make oneself unrecognizable]; Godefroy also proposes 'rendre méconnaissable, déguiser' and 'se déguiser' for its reflexive form.⁴⁴ However, Tobler-Lommatzsch's final definition for the non-reflexive form suggests that this process may equally be one of recognition: 'etw. unterscheidbar machen' [make something distinguishable].⁴⁵ The children are initially difficult to identify because they are wearing animal skins; thus the Greeks see their 'maniere de parler' – their accent, perhaps dialect and even their speech – as a disguised, obscured version of their own language, which forms their norm. The rural people have not, as Christine Ferlampin-Acher suggests, 'oublié [leur] langue première', but rather, they speak a developed version of Greek.⁴⁶ This 'descongneu' way of speaking prefigures the revelation of the rural Scottish dwellers' illustrious Trojan ancestry. In earlier Arthurian texts, 'descongneu' is used of wild, uncivilised characters who turn out to be of noble blood. According to Godefroy, one manuscript, which contains *Perceval* and the continuations, Montpellier, Bibliothèque Interuniversitaire, Section Médecine MS H 249, fol. 170, describes Perceval, who discovers his father's line is noble, as 'li biaux desconneuz'; Renaut de Beaujeu's eponymous character's pseudonym is 'li biaux desconneus', because he does not know who his father is. It later turns out to be Gauvain.⁴⁷ The earlier

⁴⁴ *TL*, II (1936), col. 1524, ll. 24-5; col. 1525, l. 25; Godefroy, II (1883), p. 563.

⁴⁵ *TL*, II (1936), col. 1525, l. 15.

⁴⁶ Christine Ferlampin-Acher, 'Perceforest et Chrétien de Troyes', in *De Sens Rassis: Essays in Honor of Rupert T. Pickens*, ed. by Keith Busby, Bernard Guidot and Logan E. Whalen (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), pp. 201-17 (p. 204).

⁴⁷ Godefroy, II (1883), p. 563; Huot in her *Postcolonial Fictions*, pp. 31-2 likens Priande, the little girl, to Perceval and Ferlampin-Acher, 'Perceforest et Chrétien de Troyes', in *De Sens Rassis*, ed. by Busby, Guidot and Whalen, pp. 202-10, also draws parallels between this episode and Chrétien de Troyes's Perceval.

usage of ‘descongneu’ suggests that the rural people’s language might just have illustrious origins, and therefore, so might they.

Nevertheless, after an embarrassingly unequal fight between the rural women and the *chevaliers*, in which the only concession they make is to use the flats of their swords, the king dismisses the people as

ignorans et non sachans la conduicte ne la maniere des faiz de la guerre selon la
coustume de nostre paÿs (2.1, p. 7)
[unaware and not knowing the conduct nor the manner of the deeds of war
according to the customs of our country]

‘Nostre paÿs’ is ironic: either Gadiffer is referring to Greece, despite his residence in Scotland, and which these rural dwellers have never visited (as far as he knows), or to Scotland, a country in which he has only just arrived, and whose laws he is creating.

However, if the king is unwilling – and unable – to recognise how foreign his own language is, a rural *preudomme* does so:

Sire, dist le preudomme, je ne sçay, fors tant qu’il me souvient bien que mon pere
parloit ainsy que vous faictes. Mais depuis est la langue sy changee que se mon
pere vivoit, il ne l’entendrait neant plus que vous. (2.1, pp. 12-13)
[Sire, the goodman said, I don’t know, except that I remember my father speaking
in the same way that you are. But since then, the language is so changed that if
my father was alive, he wouldn’t understand it any more than you do.]

This man recognises the incomers’ language as an earlier form of his own: these two languages turn out to be variants of the same one. Terence Cave notes that:

[anagnorisis] is the point of maximum tension between two languages, between
two frames of reference, or, to put it another way, between an irresistible desire
and an instinctive repudiation. (p. 261)

In this episode, failure to recognise their common language leads to open conflict between two groups, and recognition comes at the breaking point, as an attempt to calm the fight. Unease through a failure to communicate – through a failure of common linguistic signs – has led to women attacking the knights, and the knights

defending themselves with more or less full weaponry. Sylvia Huot notes that Gadiffer's Greek provokes this man's memory of his father's speech.⁴⁸ Only this man remembers enough to realise that the rural dialect is a very recent development from Gadiffer's Greek speech. Knowing his dialect's history avoids further conflict; more scenes of recognition follow this first linguistic one. The *preudomme* is Priam's sister's grandson (2.1, p. 12); the little girl whom Estonné grabs is the *preudomme*'s daughter. The people fled Troy, the *preudomme* explains, but had to swim to shore in Scotland when their boats – and all their goods – sank (2.1, p. 12). His royal heritage corroborates the power he gains in this exchange by recognising the other's language. Homi Bhabha sees the 'unhomely', his translation of Freud's *unheimlich*, as a 'displacement [by which] the borders between home and world become confused'.⁴⁹ Here, the people's home – as perceived by the knights – is their place of exile. The rural people's aristocratic Trojan heritage is revealed – to them and to the Greek knights – in the middle of a remote Scottish forest, which is indeed new to both groups. Meanwhile, the knights find a man who recognises their language as a predecessor of his own. His language and heritage turn out to be developed directly from Troy, which relativises the *chevaliers'* Greek as a dialect among others.

Gadiffer has visited this settlement to receive fealty in order to confirm his position as king of Scotland. In spite of the asymmetry created by the man's recognition of his language, he attempts to retain the upper hand by disdaining the

⁴⁸ *Postcolonial Fictions*, p. 28.

⁴⁹ Bhabha, p. 9.

rural Trojans' current speech and way of life, and offering an explanation of how these happened:

“Ha! dist le roy, par ce estes vous sy bestialz et vostre langue sy empiree.” (2.1, p. 13).
[“Ha!” said the king, “because of this, you are so beast-like and your language is grown so much worse.”]

He observes that they live scattered in the forest. He proposes that the lack of an urban centre has caused their fall from culture, and further suggests that their language has grown worse, rather than just altered, positing his own as a nostalgic standard.⁵⁰

Perhaps the *Roman de Perceforest* writer presents language determining recognition (and misrecognition) most suggestively – and with most moral daring – in the *Roide Montaigne* episode. Much later on in his reign, Gadiffer travels to the edge of his kingdom, far away from the lawgivers, to remove a lord who has persuaded his people that he is God. Aroés was initially a student. His daughter, Flamine, observes that ‘des son enfance il a esté le plus sage enchanteur que l’en sceut en ces parties’ [he has been the wisest enchanter in these parts, since he was a child] (3.2, p. 88). However, she also observes the moral consequences of his study:

Tant y estudia et aprint qu’il s’en esleva en sy grant orgueil qu’il en mist en oubliance le Souverain Dieu (3.2, p. 88)
[He studied and learned so much that his pride led him to exalt himself so much that as a result he forgot the Sovereign God.]

His *cupiditas sciendi* means he forgets God; perhaps ‘mettre en oubliance’ hints that this may have been partly intended. Aroés’s learning is doubly arcane: his knowledge of this tradition is superlative in these far-flung regions. Christine

⁵⁰ See *Postcolonial Fictions*, pp. 29-30 for analysis of this encounter in postcolonial terms.

Ferlampin-Acher draws a striking parallel with the biblical Simon.⁵¹ Flamine has already sent to the court for aid, because her mother (now dead) has told her that her father will marry her incestuously.

Through his learning, Aroés persuades his people to worship him as a god. First, he promises to create a hospital where everyone is healed within eight days (3.2, p. 90). If they prefer, he can help them die painlessly (3.2, p. 89) and enter his heaven, which he eventually shows them. He equally promises to show them hell. Aroés thus apparently fulfils the fantasy of guaranteed eternal life without pain. In the light of his claims, his people strike a deal with him:

Se vous mettez a oeuvre ce que vous prommetez et que le poeuple le voie, nous croirons fermement en vous. (3.2, pp. 89-90)
[If you put what you've promised into action, and the people see it, we will firmly believe in you.]

However, Flamine stresses that his schemes are fictions and that the people are fooled. Really, at night, he throws those who do not recover into the sea, and then

fait dire par ung de ses complices qu'ilz ont voulu morir et qu'il les a mis en son paradis. Et quant les amis des noiez entendent ce, ilz sont joyeux a merveilles. (3.2, p. 90)
[has one of his accomplices say that they wanted to die and that he has put them in his heaven. And when the drowned person's friends hear this, they are overjoyed.]

Aroés creates a chain of narrative that is based on a lie, but which the newly bereaved are ready to believe. The people's delighted responses to his marvels mimic Christian worship, which is unsettling for the reader who is told repeatedly that these are fictions. These miracles appear *unheimlich*, familiar and yet strange: we could not tell that they were strange if none of the characters had mentioned this. Perhaps a Platonic parallel – deeply detrimental to Gadiffer's earnest newly-

⁵¹ Ferlampin-Acher, *Perceforest et Zéphir*, p. 186.

acquired Christianity – is implied. This repeated wonder means we do not expect Gadiffer to marvel when he sees how Aroés made his heaven. Yet he is ‘moult esmerveillié de la grant subtivité de ce meschant et mauvais Aroés’ [very amazed at the evil and bad Aroés’s great skill] (3.2, p. 109). He wonders at Aroés’s artifices, which include a precursor of electric lighting (3.2, p. 109) and minstrels imitating birdsong. He finally condemns him for attempting to imitate God and to improve upon His works; the people’s readiness to worship Aroés goes unmentioned because their belief does make him a godlike figure. Seeing the making of the fiction – not the fictions themselves – makes Gadiffer marvel; this feeling, occasioned by fiction, causes his desire to destroy them.

This pact rests on a conditional act of recognition, which might be understood in the light of Jacques Derrida’s analysis of another literary exchange, in Baudelaire’s ‘La Fausse Monnaie’.⁵² In this story, one of two friends gives a beggar a coin of large value, before telling his friend it is a counterfeit; yet the beggar has accepted it, and the friend wonders what the consequences will be. Derrida suggests it exemplifies a relation between the creator and reader of fiction:

La fausse monnaie n’est jamais, *comme telle*, de la fausse monnaie. Dès qu’elle est ce qu’elle est, reconnue *comme telle*, elle cesse d’agir et de valoir comme de la fausse monnaie. Elle n’est qu’en pouvant être, *peut-être*, ce qu’elle est.⁵³

Fausse monnaie does not refer to anything, because money recognised as false does not work as such: no-one will accept it. Once *fausse monnaie* is recognised, it is merely a useless, spent forgery. What is more, it has no referent; there is no

⁵² Jacques Derrida, *Donner Le Temps: 1. La Fausse Monnaie* (Paris: Galilée, 1991).

⁵³ *Donner Le Temps*, pp. 114-15.

gold bullion or guarantee behind counterfeit money: it is ‘un signe mal titré, un signe sans valeur, sinon sans signification’ (p. 113). Derrida further notes: ‘ce *peut-être* est aussi la dimension intentionnelle, à savoir le *crédit*, l’acte de foi qui structure toute la monnaie’.⁵⁴ There can be counterfeits, but only hypothetically, because it is belief that makes currency work. Derrida thus opens up the possibility of the signifier without signified, where the sign has no value.

Language is at the heart of the dispute over the *Roide Montaigne*, and it soon gives rise to an image of Babel, and the place being renamed. The people’s belief in these fictions is central to Aroés’s success. The people must allow for the possibility that he might just be god – if he can pull off his claims – for his promise to work, and ‘because they are still pagans, Aroés’s subjects are much less able to discern the bluff going on in such spectacles’.⁵⁵ Perhaps Aroés’s people also find it difficult to spot his fiction because they are so isolated: only Aroés seems to have access to outside knowledge, for only one sailor will sail happily to the island. The possibility that everyone might be fooled is not distant. Aroés brokers the deal by promising them a fake hospital, heaven and hell but the extent to which the people (apart from the drowned ones) think they are fictional varies. Our reaction ‘est dictée [...] par celle du personnage’, and in particular, the ones that we have known for longest.⁵⁶ In lieu of counterfeit (or not) currency, as

⁵⁴ *Donner Le Temps*, p. 124.

⁵⁵ Denyse Delcourt, ‘The Laboratory of Fiction: Magic and Image in the *Roman de Perceforest*’, *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 21 (1994), 17-31 (p. 22).

⁵⁶ Christine Ferlampin-Acher, ‘Aux Frontières du merveilleux et du fantastique dans *Perceforest*’, *Revue des Langues Romanes*, 101 (1997), 81-111 (p. 85).

in Derrida's analysis, Aroés wagers his rank, as deity or hubristic fraud, on the people's belief in the products of his 'laboratory of fiction'.⁵⁷

Furthermore, the fight for the *Roide Montaigne* becomes a battle for speech, and then for naming. Aroés does not reply to Gadiffer's speech, first by pride, and then because he is so angry, 'de fait il ne pouoit parler' [he could not actually speak] (3.2, p. 111). Gadiffer taunts him 'tu ne respons point?' [aren't you replying?] (3.2, p. 111). Aroés still refuses to reply, but

fist ung enchantement en telle maniere qu'il cuida bien oster la parole au chevalier et le mettre en tel point qu'il ne se peust nullement mouvoir. (3.2, p. 111)

[cast a spell as he thought would stop the knight from speaking and put him in such a state that he couldn't move at all.]

This fight for the sole right to narrate prefigures their eventual argument over who owns language and meaning. Aroés implies that Gadiffer should not speak, because his words do not describe Aroés' deeds accurately:

Comment, dist Aroés, as tu le hardement de dire que je ne soye souverain dieu, quant tu vois que a mon seul commandement je fay venir les princes des tenebres? (3.2, p. 113)

[How dare you say I am not Sovereign God, when you see that I make the princes come forth from the darkness at my mere order?]

Gadiffer replies that it is 'seulement par les vertus que Dieu a mis es parolles dont tu les attrais' [only by the strengths that God has given the words by which you summon them] (3.2, p. 113). He suggests that Aroés can only perform such magic because God has invested these words with particular strengths, or performative effects. One of the meanings of *vertus* is 'miracle, merveille'.⁵⁸ Thus Gadiffer attributes Aroés's works to God: *vertus*'s use for 'remède qui a une grande vertu', especially for plants or remedies with healing powers, might add an

⁵⁷ Delcourt, p. 24.

⁵⁸ Godefroy, VIII (1895), p. 211.

ironic dig at Aroés's claim to universal healing.⁵⁹ Gadiffer displaces Aroés's power by suggesting that, although he uses words in complex ways, they – and their impressive effects – do not belong to him. In a moment echoing the destruction of Babel, both a celebration and a condemnation of mortal creation, a great storm subsequently flattens the *Roide Montaigne*. The land is thus 'toute onnye' [all shamed] (3. 2, p. 121) as Aroés's attempt to imitate God, symbolised geographically by the *Roide Montaigne* itself, is foiled. Flamine further decides to rename the island 'Islangue', because a small, flat island opposite is called 'Lalangue', in praise of their new, humble similarity. Christine Ferlampin-Acher has associated this name with Iceland, and suggests that 'Islangue' may be an attempt to render the Scandinavian toponym in French. Flamine decides that they

porteront ung seul nom qui contendra le nom de l'une et de l'autre, car puis que la Royde Montaigne a laissié son orgueil tant qu'elle est devenue isle, il me samble que la terre doit estre nommee Islangue par accord. (3.2, p. 121)
[will bear one name alone, which will contain the name of both, because since the Royde Montaigne has so left its pride that it has become an island, it seems to me that the land should be named Islangue by agreement.]

Lalangue is so called because 'elle contient la course d'un cerf jusques au traire la langue' [it contained the path of a deer as far as you could throw a *langue de boeuf* (double-edged spear)] (3.2, p. 121). 'Traire la langue' offers a seemingly unambiguous etymology here. However, given the references to language, which precede this renaming, the other meanings of *traire la langue* – to stick out your tongue – and *traire* – to translate – are significant. This moment sees the *Roide Montaigne* geographically transformed, and it is renamed accordingly, now it is 'autant basse comme Lalangue'. Given the moral drawn from the geographical

⁵⁹ Godefroy, VIII (1895), p. 211.

shift, this renaming suggests that Gadiffer has put language back in its proper place: not at the service of one arrogant man who thinks he is god, but a humble, modest place, conscious of its imperfections and its limitations, like the ‘mortel homme’ that Gadiffer says he is. For a text so concerned with mutual understanding, *Islangue* and *Lalangue*’s remote location suggests that, for the *Perceforest* writer, language capacity is partial, precious and therefore should not be used to exceed nature, because it does not fully belong to us.

The *Roide Montaigne* episode combines anxieties over genealogy and material reproduction. Flamine initially summons Gadiffer because she suspects her father will try to marry her and make her his queen. If Gadiffer had not intervened to break Aroés’s fictions, Flamine would have married a self-styled god who had created a visible heaven, hell and universal hospital, in which everyone believed. His two projects are closely linked: Aroés reveals his heaven to his people on the eve of marrying his daughter. The connection between material creation and genealogy is present from the start: the book – which contains a lost part of the history of Britain’s royal lineage – is discovered with a crown on an altar. These accompanying objects signal the book’s importance; the abbot sends the crown to the king.

Material and Textual Reproduction

In a series of episodes in the first book of the *Roman de Perceforest*, the writer raises further questions about how authority is created and its capacity to be replicated, dispersed and supplanted. These stories all hinge on the making of crowns, the most important symbol of kingship. After having revealed a ‘perron

de marbre' [raised marble platform] (1.1, p. 103) for Betis's coronation, a dwarf cautions Alexandre on the very crown that he will use: 'regarde quelle elle est' [look at how it is] (1.1, p. 104). Alexandre nonchalantly remarks that it is 'et bonne et riche' [both good and rich] (1.1, p. 104), but when he does look at it,

sy luy fut bien advis qu'elle fust sy grande que le corps d'un homme passast parmy sans la couronne adesper, dont il fut tout esbahy. (1.1, p. 105)
[it seemed to him that it was so large that a man's body would pass through without touching the crown, at which he was completely shocked.]

He further exclaims 'je voy grans merveilles' [I see great marvels] (1.1, p. 105), as he does when later he hears people calling Betis Perceforest, and he promptly requests another crown; he and the dwarf have different requirements for this object. Once the dwarf says they cannot use this crown, Alexandre's perceptions change, so that using it seems ludicrous. Especially since he is also using a dais that has just appeared, Alexandre's authority – as his perceptions start to become unreliable – is thus comically circumscribed.

The dwarf moreover informs him:

Gentil roy, ne vous penez de vostre roy couronner de couronne de cest paÿs, car il n'y a nulle able a luy, mais souffrez ung pou, car assez tost viendra celle dont il doit estre couronné, si comme la sage dame dist qui de luy ou de son lignage doit avoir mestier, si comme tesmoignent les sors. Et pour a cellui roy faire honneur, elle a fait faire une couronne dont il sera couronné, et non d'autre. (1.1, p. 105)
[Noble king, don't go to the trouble of crowning your king with a crown from this country, because there is none fitting for him, but wait a little, because the one with which he must be crowned will come quite soon, as the wise lady says who is to have need of him or his lineage, as the fates bear witness. And to honour this king, she has had a crown made with which he will be crowned, and not with another.]

A lady has already had Betis's crown made for the occasion: either news travels fast to lands outside this country or she knew he was coming. This crown is foreign to both Betis and the land, and yet the damsel who delivers it tells them that 'd'aulture ne peult estre couronné' [he cannot be crowned with another] (1.1, p. 106). The 'sage dame' turns out later to be Aroés's wife, who subsequently

asks the court for help because her husband wants to sleep with their daughter and to proclaim himself God. The crown's provenance modifies our understanding of reproduction and kingship in this episode, which is central to the *Roman de Perceforest*. First, in the light of the *Roide Montaigne* episode, Betis's coronation is transformed into a set of fictions in which the *chevaliers estranges* fully believe, just like Aroés's people do later. For example, Alexandre is 'moult esmerveillié' [very astonished] (1.1, p. 103) at the shiny marble dais; he hopes that 'les dieux l'ayent cy apporté' [the gods brought it here] (1.1, p. 103). After the damsel has brought the crown and disappears, he 's'esbahissoit des merveilles' [was amazed at the marvels] (1.1, p. 107). The mystery of the appearance of these objects, together with Alexandre's wonder, which leads him to posit divine work, demonstrates the effect of such material creations, or perhaps, given Jacques Le Goff's observations on *mirabilia*, such visual perceptions.⁶⁰ Characters – and readers – wonder especially at these when their production is unexplained. Unlike in the *Roide Montaigne* episode, the reader is not privy to the fiction here. Concealing the production of such spectacle confirms the coronation's authority; even if Betis and Alexandre really do not know how the dais and the crown arrived, these mystifying, symbolic objects paradoxically add weight to their ceremony for the same reader who is shown a dwarf telling Alexandre how to run a coronation.

The theoretical framework provided by Judith Butler in her now classic work, *Gender Trouble*, offers a useful analogy for understanding what is at stake in this episode. In her study, she analyses the construction of gender as a social

⁶⁰ Le Goff, p. 18.

identity; her work remains vital for understanding how gender identity is created through a ‘stylised repetition of acts’ or carrying out the same actions.⁶¹ This repetition points to the ‘imitative structure of gender itself’, which grows out of her observance of drag.⁶² For Butler, performing actions again and again retroactively creates an essential idea of gender: the copy creates the notion of the original. Objects associated with kingship help here to make Perceforest a king. It is difficult to disregard the dais and crown’s authority, even when we know – amusingly – that those performing the coronation did not expect or plan for their presence.

Furthermore, before this crown is revealed later to be a probable magic trick, its value becomes relative when another magnificent crown appears. This ‘cercle’, or coronet, is placed as the last – and best – in a series of tournament prizes. It is

ung cercle d’or qu’elle eut a son couronnement, sy bel et sy riche et sy noble que au monde n’avoit son pareil, car le tour avoit bien une palme de lé, ouvré a ymaiges qui demonstroient toute l’ystoire de Troyes. (1.2, p. 859)
[a golden coronet that she had at her coronation, so beautiful, so rich and so noble that it had no equal in the world, because its circumference was a palm’s width, worked with images that showed all the history of Troy.]

It no longer acts solely as a coronet, but as an object of high worth. The writer initially points to its excellence through ekphrasis: it tells the complete history of Troy. However, that story is not fixed; retellings of it are frequently fragmentary and partial. Indeed, in the *Roman de Perceforest*, the story of Troy is still continuing: the four-hundred-year-old Dardanon was at Troy and is still alive;

⁶¹ *Gender Trouble*, p. 192.

⁶² *Gender Trouble*, p. 187.

several Trojan descendants recall their ancestry; and objects used at the battle of Troy, including Hector's sword, are presented as relics.

Furthermore, the coronet – and by implication, the story on it – is adjustable.

il y avoit .XXII. carnieres, si que on le faisoit grant et petit selon les chiefz ou l'en le vouloit asseoir, et sy avoit sur chacune carnier une fleur de liz tresjectee de fin or a pierres precieuses. (1.2, p. 859)
[There were twenty-two hinges, so that it was made big and small according to the heads on which one wanted to put it, and on each hinge, there was a fleur-de-lis covered with pure gold and precious stones.]

First, this coronet is designed to move from head to head, which anticipates its long usage as it is translated in time – and space – from queen to queen, and from Troy to Scotland. It can thus physically hide – or expand – its own story of Troy, highlighting how selective its retelling can be. Through the hinges' decoration, the writer further comments on the importance of representation, and specifically, language, in enabling such an ancient story to be transmitted:

Sy devez sçavoir que sur chacun floron de la fleur avoit ung oyselet de fin or ouvré par telle maistrie que ja sy pou de vent ferist es becqz qu'ilz ne jectassent son selon la maniere de l'oiselet sur qui il estoit figuré. Sy devez sçavoir qu'il n'estoit plus de melodie que de les oïr, car il n'y avoit celluy qui ne jectast son sy propre au chant de l'oiseil dont il estoit fait que qui ne les veist et oïst iceulx, sy deist il: 'Celluy est ung frion et celluy ung rousseignollet et celluy ung cardonnerel.' (1.1, pp. 859-60)
[You should know that each flower petal bore a bird, worked in pure gold with such skill that if such a tiny gust of wind hit the beaks, they would throw out sound according to the manner of the bird on which it was figured. You should know that there was no greater melody than hearing them, because there wasn't one who threw out such a sound appropriate to the song of the bird on which he was modelled, that whoever saw and heard them, said, 'That one is a rook, that one a nightingale and that one a goldfinch'.]

From the writings of the first Occitan poet, birdsong works as a metaphor for poetic language. Guilhem IX writes that the birds sing 'chascus en lor lati' [each in their language], which indicates both that their languages are meaningful systems, and, like its cognate Latin, which was only available to the clergy and

nobility at this point, only an elite can understand them.⁶³ In an unusual variant in the *Roman de la Rose*, recorded in the 1814 edition but not noted in Langlois's edition, the writer remarks that the birds 'chantoient en lor patois'.⁶⁴ The *Roman de Perceforest* writer uses a similar metaphor of artificial birds, this time drawn from art rather than nature, to open up the difficulties of writing about an event that has largely been narrated in a foreign language.

First, the faithfulness of the artificial birdsong makes their sound especially beautiful. Anyone who listens to – and sees – these birds can identify their species. Nonetheless, to the human ear, when these different songs are heard together – in a planned combination – they produce an aesthetically pleasing 'melodie'. Further intellectual pleasure arises from recognising the different species in this cultural replica of a natural phenomenon that surpasses all others. Thus the artificial birds present a reflection on responses to foreign languages, and in particular, an image for translation, copying and reproduction. The birds' mutually incomprehensible songs imply that establishing an original 'birdsong' – or, for that matter, a Trojan story – is neither possible nor desirable. We can replicate it, but its sense is obscure to us. This sound gives us pleasure, and we know it represents a system of meaning as a 'chant', but we do not understand its precise signification. In this way, it illuminates the coronet's other represented images: the story of Troy, which, despite abundant witnesses, remains elusive.

⁶³ Guilhem IX, 'Ab la dolchor del temps novel', in *The Poetry of William VII, Count of Poitiers, IX Duke of Aquitaine*, ed. by Gerald A. Bond (New York: Garland, 1982) p. 36, l. 3.

⁶⁴ Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Le Roman de la Rose*, ed. by Dominique Martin Méon, 2 vols (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1814), l. 720.

The song's importance in transmitting a message is therefore crucial to understanding. The birds' message is obscure, but the narrator who mediates this is readily understandable and firmly present. He is unusually prominent in this episode, and repeatedly tells the reader 'sy sachiez' or 'sy devez sçavoir'. The emphasis on transmitting knowledge creates a retroactive awareness of fictional loss: the words on the page are an imperfect witness to this magnificent coronet. By just such a process of creation through narration – in which this coronet participates – has the story of Troy been passed down. The narrator's didactic prominence highlights the importance of the fictional metalworkers, who made the adjustable coronet, in representing the story of Troy.

What is more, when Gadiffer's wife introduces the coronet, she envisages its future written legacy if it is taken into the tournament.

Mille ans seroit le cercle en vostre tresor que n'en avriez ja honneur [...] s'il est despiecé sur vostre heaume au trenchant de l'espee par bras de preu chevalier, plus noblement ne puet estre departy. Adont le recueillirent heraulx et menestrelz qui en avront la richesse [...] et vous en avrez la louenge et l'onneur qu'ilz feront corner a leurs buisines par le monde a tousjours. (1.2, pp. 860-61)
 [The coronet would be in your treasury for a thousand years and you wouldn't get any honour from it [...] if it is smashed on your helmet, on the sword's cutting edge by the arm of a brave knight, it could not be broken up more nobly. Then heralds and minstrels will record/collect it who will have the wealth from it [...] and you will have the praise and honour that they will blast forever from their trumpets throughout the world.]

Recueillir means both to record and to gather up and collect, reassembling the broken object – or indeed texts, as in *recueil*. Within the book's fiction, Lydoire imagines the heralds and minstrels returning the broken crown to a previous – and now irretrievable – state of perfection, 'par le monde a tousjours'. The minstrels' subsequent tales will forever reproduce the crown throughout the world: Walter Benjamin remarks that

Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be.⁶⁵

These verbal copies are already distinct from the coronet, which also only exists for us in a copy (the text of the *Roman de Perceforest*). Jacques Derrida notes that when translating, we try to ‘restaurer, mais en vérité d’inventer’ an imagined perfect language.⁶⁶ I suggest that Lydoire’s vision of the legacy of this fictional medieval coronet enacts just such a process. She thinks that the destruction of the coronet would encourage creation and multiply further retellings of the story of Troy. Rather than restoring a crown, the heralds would in fact assemble the coronet anew, in stories told in different periods and settings, just like this one, which has produced this particular version of this coronet.

These stories’ capacity for reproduction is clear in the ‘richesse’ produced if the coronet were broken. Coins are one of the three examples Benjamin cites of Greek (but implicitly, pre-industrial) artworks that ‘they could produce in quantity’.⁶⁷ In this comparison of fiction to currency that could be readily copied, the minstrels’ capital might well multiply, as Derrida suggests of ‘La Fausse Monnaie’ in his analysis of Baudelaire’s poem, discussed earlier in this chapter. Lydoire envisages future purveyors of tales creating – and breaking – new fictional crowns over and over again. The story of Troy is set to be recreated many more times, she suggests.

Her comments, which seem so light regarding value and authority, are striking given the object’s decoration. First, the ancient history of Troy is

⁶⁵ Walter Benjamin, ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’, in *Illuminations*, pp. 212-44 (p. 214).

⁶⁶ *Monolinguisme*, p. 118.

⁶⁷ ‘The Work of Art’, p. 212.

fragmented and was very nearly lost in Britain, until a Greek scholar came and translated it, and it was further put into French. But it offers the opening of both British and European history: its importance for medieval historical narrative cannot be overestimated. Second, we cannot understand what the birds are saying to each other, and possibly, neither can birds of different species understand the songs of others. Lydoire's vision thus satirises the possibility of preserving such origins, as does her final comment:

Pour ce portez le lyement, car j'ay ouvrier qui ung plus bel me refera par loisir.
(1.2, p. 861)

[Because of this, carry it happily, because I have a worker who will make me a more beautiful one when he has the opportunity.]

Lydoire could refer here to how her minstrel would embellish that crown in his fiction, at least. However, 'ouvrier' could also refer to a goldsmith or craftsman in the plastic arts. She envisages a copy of the original with a light touch that anticipates the easy reproduction of mechanical objects; in this, she does not focus on the 'uniqueness' of the work of art, unlike Walter Benjamin's example of the medieval clerics before a statue of Venus, for whom it is an 'ominous idol'.⁶⁸ Like Lydoire, they view the statue in relation to the present, but conscious of the work's 'uniqueness, that is, its aura', something which Benjamin suggests is best preserved by keeping at a distance, 'however close it may be'.⁶⁹ Rather, she emphasises the importance of the present tournament for this particular coronet, which may then be reproduced both in words and as a linguistic object. Her strong sense of shaping the present corresponds with her husband Gadiffer's expectations

⁶⁸ 'The Work of Art', p. 217

⁶⁹ 'The Work of Art', p. 217, p. 216.

to find people without history in Scotland, and to see themselves cultivating virgin territory.

Her attitude relies upon the presence of the ‘ouvrier’ who can make her an improved copy ‘par loisir’ [when he has the opportunity] (1.2, p. 861). The worker’s apparent *sprezzatura* further places this crown as a plaything, produced to delight himself and others. However, the narrator’s comment belies Lydoire’s image of workers who make coronets in their spare time:

[Priam] fist faire ce cercle pour couronner Ecuba, la royne sa femme [...] Sy fut adont le cercle recommandé et prisié le plus noble et le plus riche que on sceust par le dit des ouvriers. Et sachiez que a icelluy temps Troyes la cité estoit la plus grant, la plus riche, la plus noble, la plus aournee de bonne chevalerie et la ou tous les plus soubtilz ouvriers estoient qui a son temps fussent. (1.2, p. 867)

[Priam had this coronet made to crown Hecuba, his wife the queen [...] The coronet was at that time recommended and prized as the most noble and rich that anyone knew, by the workers’ word. And know that, at that time, the city of Troy was the largest, the richest, the noblest and the most adorned with good chivalry; all the most subtle workers were there, who were around at that time.]

The workers’ collective word guarantees the coronet as the best of its kind; the value of their testimony is underpinned by their own skill and Troy’s excellence, which suggests that their work is far from a hobby. The coronet’s historic worth rests on a number of verbal testimonies, including that of the narrator, who introduces this ancient evidence. The coronet’s worth therefore does not lie as much in its materials as in the cultural skills of those who created it, and who inaugurate a tradition of esteeming it highly, though how this tradition was passed down – or whether it is fictional – is unclear. Similarly, Lydoire’s light-hearted attitude towards it relies both on having workers who can create a similar (or better) object and on her awareness of its potential historical legacy in writing or song.

After the Roman invasion wipes out Perceforest's army and nearly all the inhabitants of Britain, the second half of the *Roman de Perceforest* mythifies the first as characters slowly rediscover evidence of the previous chivalric era. This time is commemorated – and recreated – through songs and stories, just as Lydoire imagined would happen if the coronet had been broken. Adrian Armstrong and Sarah Kay have noted that 'in no other period of French literature has lyric poetry been partnered in this remarkable way with history writing'; within the fiction of the lost history, newly discovered in the hidden book, the *Roman de Perceforest* repeatedly shows lyric's capacity to shape the creation of history and tradition.⁷⁰ Characters sing *lais* widely in the first half of the *Roman de Perceforest* but with a specific message that is meant for one recipient, such as the composer's lover.⁷¹ These are sung once more in the second half of the *Perceforest*, when no-one can understand their specific message. Armstrong and Kay note that

While demonstrating that poetry *can* record history, [writers who include lyrics within histories] also imply that there is more to history, thus recorded, than meets the prose chronicler's eye.⁷²

The *Roman de Perceforest* writer shows this process within the fiction, as lyrics are transmitted in new situations by later generations.⁷³ This process begins when Gallopin, the son of the king of the minstrels, meets Ourseu, Estonné's son. Gallopin's father is ill but 'commence a regarir' [starts to recover] (4.2, p. 917) on hearing that knights are returning to Britain. Gallopin meets Ourseu, who has had a vision of meeting him, and hearing him play a *lai*, which 'faisoit mention de

⁷⁰ Armstrong and Kay, p. 54.

⁷¹ See Huot, 'Chronicle', in *Vox Intexta*, ed. by Doane and Pasternack on this phenomenon, p. 209.

⁷² Armstrong and Kay, p. 60.

⁷³ See Huot, 'Chronicle', in *Vox Intexta*, ed. by Doane and Pasternack, pp. 209-12.

Pergamon l'ancien hermite et des veus aux douse chevaliers' [mentioned Pergamon the ancient hermite and the vows of the twelve knights] (4.2, p. 916).

Already, the first knight in Britain imagines Gallopin retelling old stories.

Gallopin retells Ourseu his vision of his father instructing him:

sy t'en va atout ta harpe en la Forest Darnant et la recorde les lais du tamps passé
que je t'apris en ta jennesse, parquoy recorder tu puisses les prouesses des
anciens preudhommes devant la destruction de Bretagne: le tamps en est venu.
(4.2, pp. 917-18)
[go away with your harp into the Forest Darnant and there, record the *lais* of
olden times that I taught you in your youth, by which you may record the
prowesses of the old nobles before Britain was destroyed: the time has come.]

His father tells him to go into the forest, which he still calls by the name of the rulers before Perceforest. *Recorder* suggests that Gallopin must retell the stories he has learnt in order to preserve them, but also make them fit together or agree.⁷⁴

In the light of Ourseu's dream about him, 'faisoit mention' suggests that these songs could be flexible: like the coronet's story of Troy, these episodes can be adjusted, or even moved around within a *lai*. Gallopin is therefore the repository of these stories, but he creates them too: for example, he explains the origins of Perceforest's name for the first time (4.2, p. 919). In this way, the characters in post-Roman Britain play the old songs, but without their original meaning, which was only known to a select few: for example, Gallopin plays the Lay de Pergamon (4.2, p. 1013).

Nevertheless, the 'Lay de Complainte' is received differently through transmission, because it retains its provenance. A minstrel playing this song provokes nostalgia in Blanche, its intended recipient. It was made by

⁷⁴ Godefroy, VI (1889), pp. 681-2.

le preu Lyonnel quant il avoit perdu son lion, son escu et le chief aux crins dorez,
dont la dame si commença a plourer en son cuer pour l'amour du tamps passé.
(4.2, p. 1081)

[the brave Lyonel when he had lost his lion, his shield and the head with golden
hair, at which the lady began to cry in her heart for the love of the past.]

Lyonel's original song is about his own loss; here, this subject is doubly fitting as
Blanche laments losing a time, singer and lover, none of which can be regained.

Their daughter and son's names, Lyonnelle and Lionnel, newly mark that lost
past. She decides to inaugurate a new tournament and orders her son, 'multipliez
en remplissant la terre comme j'ay fait' [multiply, filling up the land as I did] (4.2,
p. 1082). Sexual reproduction is a compelling metaphor for this reprise of
tournaments. At the first one, Gallopin forces the new knights to learn about
chivalry:

Ainsi commença le tournoy de la chevalerie qui oncques n'avoit tournoyé. (4.2,
p. 968)

[Thus began the tournament of the knights who had never participated in a
tournament.]

The minstrels, therefore, enable the new generation to imitate the old one, even
though they have very limited contact with them. Even the young girls 'n'avoient
point aprins a voir' [had not learnt to watch] (4.2, p. 967): the female gaze must
be trained. All aspects of the tournament must be learnt, even though they are no
longer current. Indeed, later on, the girls create a new *lai* themselves for the *Dieu
des Desirriers des Pucelles*: the *Chevalier au Dauphin*, who won the coronet, is
now worshipped as a god after he was killed at the battle for Britain. Sylvia Huot
remarks that he is 'a hero to all *pucelles*, who in this pre-Christian world would
regard him as their god'.⁷⁵ But this process equally indicates the post-invasion
Britain's distance from, and consequent reverence of, the time of Perceforest's

⁷⁵ *Postcolonial Fictions*, p. 106.

reign, through which Christianity is slowly being introduced. The new generation is happy to create traditions – and even myths – around the previous one, often using its own models. Past events are narrated for the first time, in new songs which are patterned on old ones.

Conclusion

It is not just learned behaviour that drives the second generation's chivalric success, which is in no small part down to inherited strength, nobility and even mission. The last knight to be born before the one who destroys Greek Britain, Gallafur, emerges with a book in his hand. His father says:

C'est signe d'ung preudhomme: et sy ne sçay ma banniere a charger a meilleur que a preudhome, pourquoy je la luy charge apres moy, car il aura a nom Gallafur comme moy.⁷⁶

[It's the sign of a nobleman: and I don't know what better to put on my banner than as a nobleman, because of which I give him the banner after me: because he will have Gallafur as his name, like me.]

As the last ruler of Britain during this period, before everything is destroyed once more, Gallafur the younger's role as recorder is crucial. His father names him, aware of the book's capacity to pass on knowledge: the most important piece of wisdom is how to be a nobleman. Gallafur gives his son his name, but their destinies are divergent. This same sign, whose referent alters, is a fitting image for the end of this text which claims to be translated. Translation, recognition and misrecognition are central to the aesthetics of the texts that I have considered in this thesis, and the boy with the same name as his father, born holding a book, is

⁷⁶ *La Treselegante Delicieuse Melliflue et trespaisante hystoire du tresnoble victorieux et excellentissime Roy Perceforest*, 3 vols (Paris: Egidius Gormontius, 1532), III, 6, lii, fol. ciii rb. I have added modern punctuation and modernised spelling, in accordance with Roussineau's editorial policy.

an apt symbol for my argument: translation is always a secondary process of creation.

Conclusion: Renaissance responses

During the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries, French is the predominant European literary vernacular; it is not associated with any one particular nation or monarchy. One story whose dissemination reflects the transnational usage of that language in this period is the one studied in this thesis: the fall of Troy and its aftermath catch the imagination of French-language writers all over Western Europe.

The *Roman de Troie* is written at the Plantagenet court, which controlled Aquitaine and England; the prose *Troie* traditions examined in the second chapter originate from Flanders and Italy, and are most widely disseminated in the latter territory; John Gower writes in London and Christine de Pizan, born in northern Italy, is at the French court and is invited to the English one; finally, the *Roman de Perceforest* survives in manuscripts produced at the Burgundian court. The Troy story captivated writers throughout Europe; I have principally examined the tradition in French, but German, Spanish, Irish, Italian, Romanian, Spanish, Czech, Catalan and English writers all treat this material too (the popularity of Guido delle Colonne's *Historia Destructionis Troiae* in translation is an especially strong indicator of the wide success of this material). This tradition circulated all over Europe and evolved in diverse ways, some of which I have tried to track here.

This thesis sets out how translation shapes textual production in an argument comprising four chapters, which chart the enduring appeal of the story of the fall of Troy for medieval writers. Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie*

is the first French text to make a claim for translation, as Chapter One outlined; within this text, this claim offers a means of interpreting Benoît's presentation of the failure and display of hospitality within the Trojan story. Through these acts of hospitality, a series of women begin to be exchanged as gifts; their status as such is highlighted when they are accompanied by exotic objects which themselves have travelled a great distance. The creation and dissemination of one particular cultural object, the 'image' or the statue or idol, catches the writers' attention in the prose Troy traditions, which rework the *Roman de Troie* and its Latin antecedent, a phenomenon which I examine in Chapter Two. In particular, the idols are renamed as they are copied widely: these writers' interest in the geographical spread of the idols is indicative of their concern to map movements of people, by charting the retroactive creation of place names.

The story of the movement of the very old book, in narratives of *translatio studii*, produces such narratives of migration; the book's history is just one example of the long-lasting consequences of *translatio*, which can equally disrupt existing periodisations. Translation's capacity to disrupt linear understandings of time remains important even in texts where it no longer seems an obvious part of a narrative framework, as Chapter Three highlights. That chapter observes one phenomenon that marks translation's continued significance as a means of presenting textual production: the phenomenon of the example in multilingual writings. Nonetheless, translation does not fall entirely from favour in this respect: in Chapter Four, the topos of translation from a very old book offers one way to open up narratives of periods that appear to be unrecorded. The fifteenth-century *Roman de Perceforest* shows the enduring capacity of the Trojan material to

create genealogies. Surviving only in manuscripts from the Burgundian court, which was fascinated with the Trojans, it fills in a gap in another country's history: the era when the Greeks invaded a Britain principally inhabited by Trojans.

The contribution this thesis makes to our understanding of medieval French literature is threefold. Most importantly, showing renewed depth within the very old book topos complicates our ideas of how medieval writers conceptualised their fictions. Furthermore, it highlights the centrality of translation as a means of presenting concepts of the past, which particularly emphasises the partiality of representation, and finally, it states the importance and vigour of the set of stories about the Trojans both to narratives of *translatio imperii et studii* and to contemporary concepts of identity, which were far from fixed. This thesis might thus encourage readers to treat such claims for origins in all their historical and geographical complexity – particularly in the case of such an enduring story as that of the fall of Troy – and begin to reflect, perhaps, on the uses to which narratives of the past – whether ancient, recent, or both – are created and reshaped.

I would therefore like to suggest briefly how these medieval narratives shaped the thought of three canonical Renaissance writers, a period that is often perceived as distancing itself from the Middle Ages; however, these narratives retain their power in forming conceptions of origins and genealogy. Two writers at the heart of the French Renaissance curriculum, Pierre de Ronsard and Jean Racine, and one within the English canon, Edmund Spenser, respond at three different historical moments to medieval understandings of Troy as a place of

origins for the present. These writers are most often studied within the two national literary traditions within which the texts in this thesis are usually classed, French and English literature: Racine responds to Ronsard's 1572 *Franciade* in his preface to *Andromaque* (1667), and Edmund Spenser writes his *Faerie Queene* during the 1590s, the canonical high point of English literature. In his second preface to his hugely successful *Andromaque* (1667), set in the aftermath of the Trojan War, Racine notes:

Il est vrai que j'ai été obligé de faire vivre Astyanax un peu plus qu'il n'a vécu: mais j'écris dans un Pays où cette liberté ne pouvoit pas être mal reçue. Car, sans parler de Ronsard, qui a choisi ce même Astyanax pour le Héros de sa *Franciade*; Qui ne sait que l'on fait descendre nos anciens Rois de ce Fils d'Hector, et que nos vieilles chroniques sauvent la vie à ce jeune Prince, après la désolation de son Pays, pour en faire la Fondateur de notre Monarchie?¹
 [It is true that I have been obliged to let Astyanax live a little more than he really did: but I am writing in a land where this liberty cannot be received badly. For, without mentioning Ronsard, who chose this very Astyanax for the hero of his *Franciade*, who does not know that our former kings are generally had to descend from this son of Hector, and that these old chronicles save this young prince's life, after the desolation of his land, to make him the founder of our monarchy?]

He appeals to an idea of modern aesthetic traditions in France to explain why he has increased the importance of Hector's son within the play. In doing so, he demonstrates how these stories are generated retroactively: like the *Roman de Landomata*, examined in Chapter Two, both the 'vieilles chroniques' and Ronsard preserve Hector's son so that he might serve as the protagonist of another narrative. Troy functions as a place of origins here as it does in the *Historia Regum Britannie*, the prose *Troie* tradition, the *Histoire Ancienne*, Gower's *Vox Clamantis* and the *Roman de Perceforest*. Also in Racine's preface, he notes the lines from Virgil which inspire the play: Troy's 'désolation' generates migrations,

¹ Jean Racine, *Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. by Georges Forestier, 2 vols (Paris: Pléiade, 1999), I, p. 298.

which, for Racine, entail Pyrrhe's threat of forced marriage to his Trojan captive, Hector's widow Andromaque.

Racine further notes that his understanding of these processes of retroactive creation was formed in no small part by Ronsard.² In his sonnet IX, Ronsard's narrator remarks to Helene:

Homere en se jouant de toy fist une fable
Et moy l'histoire au vray. Amour, pour te flater,
Comme tu fis à Troye, au coeur me vient jetter
Le feu qui de mes os se paist insatiable.
[Homer, amusing himself, made a fiction about you, and I wrote the true story.
To flatter you, Love comes to set a fire – which, insatiable, feeds on my bones –
in my heart, as you did to Troy.] (*Second Livre des Sonnets pour Helene*, I, p. 383, IX, ll. 5-8)

He presents himself as Homer's rival, collapsing the temporal distance between them. This juxtaposition plays on medieval traditions – as evident in Benoît de Sainte-Maure's prologue, for example – of calling Homer a liar. Racine's and Ronsard's use of Astyanax, Homer's name for Hector's son, indicates their own partial desire to occlude medieval French and Latin traditions of transmission, since neither Benoît de Sainte-Maure and the prose *Troie* tradition's name for Hector's son, Landomata, nor the principal medieval Latin source for Trojan material, Dares Phrygius, is mentioned. By omitting the verb in line six, Ronsard leaves his time of writing ambiguous: he could have long finished his 'histoire', like Homer, or, with the present tense in the next line, he might still be writing. Helene thus transcends time; as she caused Troy to be set alight, so does Amour 'vient jetter le feu' to Ronsard's heart. Ronsard's sense of simultaneity with

² Pierre de Ronsard, *Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. by Jean Céard, Daniel Ménager and Michel Simonin, 2 vols (Paris: Pléiade, 1993-94). Further references given in parentheses within the text by page and line number where appropriate.

Homer in this poem is perhaps elucidated by his attitudes towards textual production.

Nonetheless, Ronsard's grasp of his debt to medieval traditions of writing about Troy is shown in his preface to his *Franciade*, a heroic poem which traces the genealogy of Francus, the fictional founder of the French monarchy, back to Troy.

Le bon Poëte jette tousjours le fondement de son ouvrage sur quelques vieilles Annales du temps passé, ou renommee inveteree, laquelle a gaigné credit au cerveau des hommes. [...] Homere au paravant luy en avoit fait de mesme [as Virgil], lequel fondé sur quelque vieil conte de son temps de la belle Heleine & de l'armée des Grecs à Troye, comme nous faisons des contes de Lancelot, de Tristan, de Gauvain & d'Artus, fonda là dessus son *Iliade*. Car les propres noms des Capitaines & soldats Troyens qui parloient Phrygien, & non Grec, & avoient les noms de leur nation, monstrent bien comme evidemment ce n'est qu'une fiction de toute l'*Iliade*, & non verité: comme de Hector, Priam, Polydamas, Anthenor, Deiphoebus, Cassandre, Helenus, & presque tous les autres forgez au plaisir d'Homere.

Or imitant ces deux lumieres de Poësie, fondé & appuyé sur nos vieilles Annales, j'ay basti ma *Franciade*, sans me soucier si cela est vray ou non, ou si nos Roys sont Troyens ou Germains, Scythes ou Arabes. (I, p. 1167)
[The good poet always sets the base of his work on some old annals from the past, or well-established renown, which has gained credit in men's minds [...] Like Virgil before him, who did the same, Homer – who built his work on some old tale of his time about beautiful Helen and the army of the Greeks at Troy, as we make tales about Lancelot, Tristan, Gauvain and Arthur – built his *Iliad* upon that story. For the proper names of the Trojan captains and soldiers, who spoke Phrygien, and not Greek, and who bore the names of their nation, show clearly how obviously the entire *Iliade* is nothing but a fiction, and not truth: as are Hector, Priam, Polydamas, Anthenor, Deiphoebus, Cassandre, Helenus and nearly all the others made at Homer's pleasure.

Now, imitating these two lights of Poetry, founded and based upon our ancient Chronicles, I have built my *Franciade*, without worrying if it is true or not, or if our kings are Trojans or Germans, Scythians or Arabs.]

Ronsard occludes his medieval predecessors in writing about Troy by defining the French traditions as principally Arthurian ones, but his *Franciade* owes more to Geoffrey of Monmouth, the *Roman de Brut*, the *Roman de Perceforest* and other narratives of *translatio imperii*, which lead to the foundation of a current land, than it does to Homer. His line of reasoning that suggests that the *Iliad* is a fiction

equally draws on themes central to medieval French writings about Troy. The *Iliad* must be fictional, Ronsard argues, because the Trojan names are not in the language he expects to be theirs, 'Phrygien', but rather in Greek, the language of Homer as well as that of the Trojans' enemies. Unlike the *Roman de Troie*, he does not posit the text he is working with as a translation; for him, the untranslatability of 'propres noms' directly indicates it is a fiction. The writers in this thesis approach the Trojan material in ways distinct from Ronsard, but his train of thought provides a revealing response to their own presentations of textual production.

The very old book topos, which creates origins for the text in hand, reveals much at stake aesthetically, including implicit reflection on the fictive nature of the writers' production. The claim to translation has great consequences for how their narratives might be read productively: in order to understand what is at stake for the writers in this thesis, Ronsard's commentary is telling. Debates about whether the source text evoked exists or not are beside the point; enquiring into the effects of positing a text as a translation, an explicitly secondary form of production – which is how Ronsard identifies the *Iliad* as a fiction – sheds more light on the aesthetics of these texts. In stating that he is making a fiction, Ronsard underplays the weight of fictional national heritages: in choosing to give his French line Trojan ancestry, he draws on long-established medieval traditions – the 'vieilles Annales' [ancient Chronicles] (I, p. 1167) – but he underplays his debt to them by suggesting that he is not worried about the particularities of the ancestry he gives to the French monarchy. *Translatio imperii* always includes Troy, because the Trojans are compelled to settle elsewhere after losing their city.

He fits his ancestry of the French with models established throughout the medieval period, which frequently turn around physical and linguistic translation. Although he claims not to care, his kings are not German, Scythian or Arab, but Trojans.

Nonetheless, Ronsard's focus on France is new. His model for the Trojan genealogy of the French is not earlier histories of that territory, but stories that trace the Britons' Trojan heritage. He transfers this ancestry to France, a concept of a nation state that was then beginning to gain ground rapidly. Perhaps the capacity of this material to generate translations and rewriting that transcends national literary canons is best illustrated by contrasting the responses of these mainstays of the French university curriculum with a Renaissance writer who is usually studied within English literature. In his *Faerie Queene*, Edmund Spenser seeks to create a new genealogy for Queen Elizabeth, his Gloriana, and Britain, his Faerie Land.³ Like Ronsard, Spenser catches the potential of the narrative of emigration from Troy for both levity and high seriousness. In Book III, Canto 9, Britomart – the female knight based on Ariosto's Bradamante – discusses her ancestry with Paridell, another knight, at a courtly feast. He is flirting heavily with Hellenore, the wife of the jealous castelain, Malbecco (III, ix, 30-1); she is sat on Malbecco's blind left hand side. She asks both the knights to tell of their 'deeds of arms', their 'kindred' and their names (III, ix, 32). Paridell tells of his ancestors, Paris and Oenone, and bemoans the fall of Troy and his leaving his 'natiue soile' (III, ix, 37). He has forgotten the construction of Rome and Troynovant, in

³ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. by A. C. Hamilton (Harlow: Longman, 2007). Further references to this edition given in parentheses within the text by book, canto and stanza number.

Britain, until Britomart reminds him. Prompted, he remembers ‘Brute’, who did such deeds that he forged

A famous history to bee enrold
In euerlasting moniments of brasse,
That all the antique Worthies merits far did passe.

His worke great *Troynouant*, his worke is eke
Faire *Lincolne*, both renowmed far away,
That who from East to West will endlong seeke
Cannot two fairer Cities find this day. (III, ix, 50-1)

These great stories, that supersede those of the Ancients, prove an apt seduction tactic. If he is Paridell, Spenser’s flirty answer to Paris, the easily charmed Hellenore listens to her seducer eagerly:

But all the while, that he these speaches spent,
Vpon his lips hong faire Dame *Hellenore*,
With vigilant regard, and dew attent,
Fashioning worldes of fancies euermore
In her fraile witt, that now her quite forlore. (III, ix, 52)

The Trojan stories of migration, settlement and surpassing ancient models might last forever across Europe, but they equally prove good flirty conversation, particularly for these two avatars of Paris and Helen. Although the story overpowers Hellenore’s ‘fraile witt’, it is so seductive that it makes her begin creating ‘worldes of fancies’: whether these are about the (re)teller Paridell, imbued with the glory of the lineage, of whose importance he has little grasp, or not, the Trojan story provokes reimagining of the past – and of the future.

Appendix: Corpus of Texts Studied

Chapter One

Text	Date	Number of mss extant	Provenance ¹
<i>Roman de Troie</i>	c. 1165	30 containing complete texts; 30 manuscripts containing fragments	From Northern France and Central and Northern Italy: 1 from Champagne; 1 from Paris; 1 from Arras; 1 from Provins; 1 from Lorraine; 1 from Picardie; 1 from Lorraine/Burgundy; 2 from central Italy; 1 copied by a Lucas Boni di Florentia; 4 from Northern Italy, including 2 possibly from Padua; 1 from the Veneto. ²

¹ Information on provenance does not always tally with manuscripts extant – especially for the *Historia Destructionis Troiae* and the *Roman de Troie* – because not all manuscripts have been localised.

² Marc-René Jung, *La légende de Troie en France au moyen âge: analyse des versions françaises et bibliographie raisonnée des manuscrits* (Basel: Francke, 1996), pp. 78-330.

Chapter Two

Text	Date	Number of mss extant	Provenance
<i>Première mise en prose du Roman de Troie</i>	mid-late 13 th century	19	The 2 manuscripts for which Jung gives provenance both come from Italy. ³
<i>Deuxième mise en prose</i>	End of the 13 th century	3	Jung locates all these manuscripts to Padua, Genoa and Verona. ⁴
<i>Troisième mise en prose</i>	14 th century	1 complete ms; 6 fragments ⁵	French; Italian, perhaps Genoese. ⁶
<i>Quatrième mise en prose</i> ⁷	Last quarter of 14 th century	1	'L'unique mise en prose qui ait vu le jour en France'. ⁸
<i>Cinquième mise en prose</i>	End of 14 th century	13 mss and 4 containing the first part of the story, of which 11 replace the Troy section in the <i>Histoire Ancienne II</i> and 3 replace that in the <i>Histoire Ancienne III</i> . ⁹	9 from France; 1 from Northern France; 2 from Paris; 1 from Naples, which Avril, supported by Jung, suggests is the oldest, and the source text for at least 4 of the other manuscripts. ¹⁰
<i>Roman de Landomata</i>	End of 13 th century	20	Occurs with prose 1 and 5 and in 1 mss alongside a verse <i>Roman de Troie</i>

³ Jung, pp. 442-3.

⁴ Jung, p. 485.

⁵ Jung, p. 499.

⁶ Jung, p. 499.

⁷ *Le Roman de Troie en prose (Version du Cod. Bodmer 147)*, ed. by Françoise Vielliard (Cologne-Geneva: Fondation Martin Bodmer, 1979).

⁸ Jung, p. 503.

⁹ Jung, pp. 506-7; *Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César (Estoires Rogier): édition partielle des manuscrits Paris Bibl. Nat. f. fr. 20125 et Vienne Nat. Bibl. 2576*, ed. by Marijke de Visser-van Terwisga, 2 vols (Orléans: Paradigme 1995-99), p. 14.

¹⁰ François Avril, 'Trois manuscrits napolitains des collections de Charles V et de Jean de Berry', *Bibliothèque de l'École de Chartes*, 127 (1969), 291-328 (pp. 306-7); Jung, p. 506.

<i>Historia Destructionis Troiae</i>	1272-1287 according to Guido delle Colonne	Over 240; printed from 1475 ¹¹	The 5 rubrics given by Griffin say Guido is writing in Messina, Sicily; the authorship is normally attributed to a Guido de Columpnis de Messana. ¹² At least 3 manuscripts from Italy and 2 from France. ¹³ But wide dissemination across Europe, given the translations of the <i>Historia</i> .
<i>Histoire Ancienne I</i>	Probably 1209-13	74 ¹⁴	17 from Paris; 7 from Northern France; 4 from France; 1 from Soissons; 1 from Tours; 1 from Loire Valley/Bourges; 7 from Italy; 2 or possibly 3 from Bologna; 1 from Venice; 1 from Mantua; 3 from Acre. ¹⁵
<i>Histoire Ancienne II</i>	14 th century	11 ¹⁶	7 from France; 1 from Northern France; 2 from Paris; 1 from Naples. ¹⁷
<i>Histoire Ancienne III</i>	15 th century	3 ¹⁸	2 from France. ¹⁹

¹¹ Jung, p. 565.

¹² Guido delle Colonne, *Historia Destructionis Troiae*, ed. by Nathaniel Edward Griffin (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1936), p. 3.

¹³ Nathaniel Griffin, 'Introduction', to *Historia Destructionis Troiae*, pp. xi-xvii (pp. xii-xiii).

¹⁴ *Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César*, II (1999), pp. 12-14.

¹⁵ *Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César*, II (1999), pp. 12-14.

¹⁶ *Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César*, II (1999), p. 14.

¹⁷ *Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César*, II (1999), p. 14.

¹⁸ *Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César*, II (1999), p. 14.

¹⁹ *Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César*, II (1999), p. 14.

Chapter Three

Text	Date	Number of mss extant	Provenance
John Gower, <i>Confessio Amantis</i>	1386-90	49; 6 fragments; 10 mss containing extracts	‘Nearly all conform to this standard’: ‘copied during the first quarter of the fifteenth century, or just before, by a good professional London scribe’. ²⁰
John Gower, <i>Vox Clamantis</i>	after 1381 ²¹	10	Macaulay thinks that four of these mss bear ‘author’s corrections’. ²²
John Gower, <i>Mirour de l’Omme</i>	1376-79 ²³	1	Macaulay has ‘little doubt that this copy was written under the direction of the author’. ²⁴
Christine de Pizan, <i>Cité des Dames</i>	1404-5 ²⁵	27, including fragments ²⁶	Paris
Christine de Pizan, <i>Epistre Othea</i>	c. 1400	47 ²⁷	Paris

²⁰ Information on Gower taken from Derek Pearsall, ‘The Manuscripts’, in *A Companion to Gower*, ed. by Siân Echard (Cambridge: Brewer, 2004) pp. 73-79 unless otherwise stated.

²¹ John Gower, *The Complete Works of John Gower*, ed. by G. C. Macaulay, 4 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899-1902), II, p. xxx.

²² Macaulay, II (1901), p. lx.

²³ Macaulay, I (1899), p. xliii.

²⁴ Macaulay, I (1899), p. lxix.

²⁵ Christine de Pizan, *La Città delle Dame*, ed. by Earl Jeffrey Richards, trans. by Patrizia Caraffi (Milan: Luni Editrice, 1997), p. 514.

²⁶ Richards, p. 514.

²⁷ Christine de Pizan, *Epistre Othea*, ed. by Gabriella Parussa (Geneva: Droz, 1999), p. 24, n. 45.

Chapter Four

Text	Date	Number of mss extant	Provenance
<i>Roman de Perceforest</i>	1450s onwards ²⁸	4 ²⁹	Burgundian court ³⁰

²⁸ Tania van Hemelryck, 'Soumettre le *Perceforest* à la question: une entreprise périlleuse?' *Le Moyen Français*, 57 (2005), 369-79.

²⁹ Gilles Roussineau, 'Introduction', to *Perceforest: Quatrième Partie, Tome I* (Geneva: Droz, 1987), pp. ix-cxiii (pp. xxi-xxxiii).

³⁰ Christine Ferlampin-Acher, *Perceforest et Zéphir: Propositions autour d'un récit arthurien bourguignon* (Geneva: Droz, 2010).

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